

NPT push runs into U.S. pressure

NICOSIA (AFP) — Arab states are running up against the diplomatic clout of the United States in their campaign to force Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher starts a new Middle East tour next week, partly aimed at nudging the Arabs into signing an indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT at an April-May U.N. conference in New York.

The European Union (EU) and Russia back the U.S. stand.

One of Mr. Christopher's stops is Egypt, a U.S. ally which is spearheading a threat not to renew membership of the NPT indefinitely if Israel — considered the region's undeclared atomic giant — refuses to sign on.

Washington provides Cairo with around \$2 billion in annual aid.

Backing Egypt so far are the Gulf states of Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain as well as Syria, Lebanon, Sudan and Iraq. Baghdad's advanced nuclear weapons programme was reported destroyed and dismantled since the 1991 Gulf war.

Financial power Saudi Arabia, another major U.S. ally which Mr. Christopher plans to visit, said it will not take a stand until an Arab conference later this month.

But the editor of the Cairo magazine *Mussawar* who is close to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was sceptical about how successful the campaign will be.

Egyptian officials mean-

"All the indications are that the United States will pressure a number of Arab countries to ensure the quorum necessary for an indefinite extension of the NPT," Makram Mohammad Ahmad said.

Washington will try to block a joint Arab stand because it would "not please the Israelis who determine all American decisions concerning the Middle East," Mr. Ahmad added in this week's edition.

Israel, which is angry at its Egyptian partner in peace for taking such a tough stand, is adamant it cannot sign the NPT because it has raised the problem of the Jewish state to justify its demands: equal rights for everyone, access to civilian nuclear technology, and guarantees of security from nuclear powers.

Tehran is hoping for a limited renewal of the treaty but has said it was ready to sign the NPT without conditions.

Mexico, Indonesia, and Nigeria have also expressed doubts about the NPT, and Egypt has been in diplomatic contact with them, an Egyptian official said.

But the head of the U.S. delegation on the NPT, Thomas Graham, said on Jan. 28 he was convinced a "significant majority" would support an indefinite extension of the NPT, having counted already more than 60 firm commitments.

Lynn Davis, the U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, told reporters Tuesday Washington was on

while have given up hope they can influence the outcome of the conference and have sought instead to push for three kinds of guarantees from Israel, Arab diplomats said.

Cairo wants Israel to sign a formal declaration of intent to set a date for joining the NPT in the future, open facilities to international or Egyptian inspection, and pledge to join negotiations on drafting a treaty to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East.

Israel, unlike Egypt and the Arab countries, has not linked its position to that of Israel although it has raised the problem of the Jewish state to justify its demands: equal rights for everyone, access to civilian nuclear technology, and guarantees of security from nuclear powers.

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Lynn Davis, the U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, told reporters Tuesday Washington was on

Israel's side on this issue. "We are impressing upon Egypt our desire to have them support an indefinite extension of that treaty," she said. "We very much hope that at the end of the day the Egyptians can join us."

In theory the U.S. goal is for the NPT to be extended to all countries in the region to make the Middle East a nuclear-free zone, including Israel, Ms. Davis said.

But she immediately added, "we're also very realistic, and we would not expect the Israelis to take steps inconsistent with how they see their security today."

Earlier in the day in Cairo, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said his country wanted its nuclear row with Israel to figure on the agenda of Mr. Christopher's mission to the Middle East.

"Contacts are underway to deal with this crisis as well as the dangers threatening the peace process and the feeling of disappointment among the Palestinians," he told reporters.

Separately, the State Department announced that Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal would pay a two-day visit to Washington, starting Thursday and including meetings with Mr. Christopher.

The prince also will meet with President Bill Clinton, said the source speaking privately.

His talks with Mr. Christopher should include the Mideast peace process and the renewing of the NPT.



TALIBANS: Two Afghans of the militant Taliban movement stand at their Charasyab base 25 kilometres southeast of Kabul where nine Russian-made battle-tanks are parked.

The Taliban's have reiterated their demand for the evacuation of the Afghan capital by troops loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani (AFP photo)

Indyk appeared as U.S. envoy to Israel

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. travel curbs on Lebanon extended

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States extended for six months restrictions on travel to Lebanon which were imposed nine years ago for security reasons, a State Department official said. Secretary of State Warren Christopher signed the extension of the measures, which were first taken after a TWA jetliner was hijacked to Beirut in 1983, an official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. The measures forbid U.S. nationals to travel to Lebanon and ban flights between Beirut and U.S. cities. They are reviewed every six months by the State Department. "We need concrete improvements," the official said, adding that Washington hopes a dialogue with Lebanese officials on the issue would continue. An official Lebanese delegation, including Lebanese security officials, were in Washington in February to try to persuade the U.S. administration to ease up on the measures, as did an economic delegation. Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez said afterwards he expected a gradual lifting of the U.S. restrictions.

Mr. Indyk, 43, has been director of Near East and South Asia affairs on President Bill Clinton's National Security Council since 1993. He came to the United States in 1982 from Australia and became a naturalised U.S. citizen two years ago.

Until now, the State Department has felt that a Jewish ambassador to Israel might have a conflict of interest.

17 'collaborators' to be tried by PNA court

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority's PNA state security court will next month try 17 Gazans accused of killing a teacher and six guerrillas on orders from Israel. PNA Justice Minister Freiha Abu Middein told Al Nahar daily newspaper that the 17 were suspected of collaborating with Israel since the September 1993 autonomy agreement. Several of them will be charged with the murder of Hani Abed, an Islamic fundamentalist who taught science in Khan Yunis. He died in a car bomb on Nov. 2 which the authorities blamed on Israeli agents. Others among the group would be accused of murdering six members of the Hawks, the armed wing of Fatah, Mr. Abu Middein said. Yasser Arafat set up the military court last month despite criticism from human rights group. There will be no appeal against sentences which Mr. Arafat himself must approve.

Cyprus quake damage put at around \$5 million

NICOSIA (AFP) — An earthquake that killed two people in Cyprus last week caused two to three million Cypriot pounds (four to six million dollars) worth of damage, the government said Tuesday. Close to 700 homes were destroyed or damaged in 50 villages in the quake on Thursday which measured 5.2 on the Richter scale. Interior Minister Dinos Michaelides said. The government will immediately rebuild 76 demolished homes and plans to cover the cost of damages in full, the minister said. The worst of the damage took place in the Paphos area on the west of the island, where an elderly couple were killed and six people were injured. Seismology officials in Cyprus said weak aftershocks continued to hit the island on Tuesday.

Bushido wrestlers visit Jerusalem sites

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Far East met Mideast Tuesday when Japanese bushido wrestling champion Novohiko Takada knelt in prayer at a holocaust museum and then visited the western wall. Takada is here along with 15 other wrestlers from the United States and Japan for a tournament Thursday in Tel Aviv. Rachel Goldblatt, a spokeswoman for the wrestlers, said it would be the first time bushido, a Japanese form of martial arts, would be performed professionally outside Japan. Takada, draped in a knee-length black leather coat, donned a cardboard skullcap at the wall. Surrounded by photographers, camera crew and fans, Takada wrote a short note in Japanese and placed it in a crevice in the ancient stone wall, in the manner of religious Jews. He shook hands with police and greeted Israelis with the Hebrew word "Shalom."

Algeria shows alleged presidential assassin

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian authorities showed the alleged assassin of President Mohammad Boudiaf on television late Tuesday to quash rumours he had been killed in the bloody crushing of a prison mutiny last week.

Lembari Boumrafi, a junior army officer who had not been seen publicly since Boudiaf's assassination on June 29, 1992, was relaxed and smiling as he answered questions from an interviewer during a two-hour programme on the mutiny.

The revolt at the Serkhat prison in Algiers was put down last Wednesday by the security forces with the death of 96 inmates.

Boumrafi said the mutineers had taken him from his cell, and he had subsequently been slightly wounded in the leg but was well.

Other detainees testified that Boumrafi had seemed to be in good terms with the rebellious prisoners. Some, who had been held hostage by the mutineers, said they had been injured by their captors and not by the security forces.

They said that a leader of the banned Islamic Salvation Front, Abdul Kader Hachani, had tried to act as a mediator between the rebels and the authorities to avoid a confrontation.

The Algiers prosecutor confirmed that Hashani and Abdul Hak Layada, a former leader of the other fundamentalist group at war with the Algerian government, the Armed Islamic Group, had met officials outside the prison gate and offered to mediate.

Meanwhile in London, Amnesty International added its voice to calls for an independent enquiry into the prison mutiny to determine the exact circumstances surrounding the carnage.

In a statement published in London, the human rights organisation called for the results of the enquiry and the names of those who died in the incident to be made public "as soon as possible."

Marines find abandoned Somali orphans

MOGADISHU (R) — Few Somalis seem to be weeping about the departure of foreign troops from their soil this week — but orphaned orphans Abdulla and Ahmad cried their eyes out.

U.S. Marines, who came ashore to cover evacuating United Nations peacekeepers on Tuesday were at a loss about what to do with the young children who wailed and sobbed when Pakistani soldiers who took care of them for months left.

"The Pakistanis took care of them but now they have nowhere to go," said Sergeant Ron Turner.

The children were clearly terrified of the uniformed

American men wielding guns who seemed deeply touched by the boys' distress. "I gave them some candy. I haven't got any left," said one soldier.

But the sympathy of the Marines seemed to symbolise efforts by the world to do good in a country where the people often appeared ungrateful — and where the crisis was too great for all the money and military might of the West to solve.

The Marines were able to discover through Somali translators that the two boys had no parents and came from weak clans that live far from Mogadishu, capital of a country which foreign in-

tervention failed to pull out of tribal anarchy.

If they were turned out onto the streets, the tiny boys would join thousands of homeless children who lost their families in civil war and famine.

Somalis have a strong clan network which means those in need can always rely on relatives for help. But Abdulla and Ahmad told translators they had nobody they knew to go to.

He said that the Somalia-run institution, known as the "Restore-Hope Orphanage," after the mission in which thousands of U.S.-led troops arrived in a landmark humanitarian effort two years ago, had been closed down.

The Marines asked Somali police stationed at the seaport for advice, but the men lounging about in the shade said they should simply be thrown out.

When U.S. and Italian

marines troops abandon the beach-head bases as the last U.N. forces leave in the next couple of days, the boys could be left behind as bands of gunmen move in to loot the empty foreign bases.

Sgt. Turner said he had tried to get in touch with an orphanage set up by U.S. Marines when they first landed in Mogadishu to end Somalia's famine in December 1992.

He said that the Somalia-run

institution, known as the "Restore-Hope Orphanage," after the mission in which thousands of U.S.-led troops arrived in a landmark humanitarian effort two years ago, had been closed down.

The government tried to crack down on drug dealers selling hashish and gun sellers offering a wide array of weapons. But the officials are always a step behind the businessmen, who never seem to lack for supplies or customers.

In a city with few schools, boys become breadwinners at an early age. Boys no older than 10 often tag at your elbow to offer cigarettes. Others fill in potholes with dirt and try to flag down passing motorists for a tip.

One man was seen hacking apart rockets — before they had been fired — to sell. "It's not enough for all us, but we sometimes get free food, too," said Mohammad, who was busy repairing the front wheel of a taxi.

With so many people living at the margin, precious little is wasted. Cars of old tyres are hauled to a shop where they are made into shoes. Phone and electrical lines have been torn down for the copper, which can be resold.

There were almost daily casualties among the traders who brought loads of flour or wood into the city for no more than \$2 or \$3 a day.

Tour of Kabul is a lesson in survival skills

By Greg Myre
The Associated Press

AMMAN — When the fighting men of the Taliban commando government took over near the front line, the shooting stopped, he runs a prosperous currency exchange shop out of an old shipping container.

Amanullah, like every Kabul resident, knows that to survive in this shattered city, you have to be flexible. This rugged Asian nation has been at war for 16 years and its robust people have learned to cope, and in a few instances thrive, under the most extraordinary circumstances.

Kabul, once a lively city of bustling markets, has been ravaged by the Islamic militias that have battled for power since ousting a communist government in 1992.

There has not been electricity or running water for almost two years. The

nominal government does not function, schools are rare and there is no formal economy.

None of this stops the enterprising Afghans, who are legendary for their survival skills.

When the money-changing market was wiped out by heavy battles along the Kabul River last year, the industry quickly reemerged in the less volatile western side of town as dozens of operators set up shop in shipping containers.

Amanullah, a husky-bearded man who wears a camouflage jacket and a bandolier of bullets, keeps in contact with his troops across town via walkie-talkie.

"People have had a bad life the past few years," said Amanullah from his office, warmed by a stove. "What we all want now is peace and security."

Piled on a nearby chair were about 50 separate stacks of Afghan money,

each as thick as a brick and one worth the equivalent of \$1,000. As the business day closed, Amanullah's assistant piled the cash into a suitcase for safekeeping.

On Chicken Street, a shopping district catering to rich Afghans and the city's handful of foreigners, shop owners take orders for whiskey, vodka and beer — all illegal in the Islamic state — and deliver to your home.

The government tried to crack down on drug dealers selling hashish and gun sellers offering a wide array of weapons. But the officials are always a step behind the businessmen, who never seem to lack for supplies or customers.

In a city with few schools, boys become breadwinners at an early age. Boys no older than 10 often tag at your elbow to offer cigarettes. Others fill in potholes with dirt and try to flag down passing motorists

for a tip.

There are so many

grease-stained kids working at Syed Rahman's car repair shop that it could be mistaken for an orphanage.

Mohammad Hamid, who looks younger than his 14 years, has in fact lost his parents to the war and he supports his three younger brothers on his monthly salary of 12,000 Afghanis, the equivalent of \$5.

"It's not enough for all us, but we sometimes get free food, too," said Mohammad, who was busy repairing the front wheel of a taxi.

With so many people living at the margin, precious little is wasted. Cars of old tyres are hauled to a shop where they are made into shoes. Phone and electrical lines have been torn down for the copper, which can be resold.

Thousands of those still

in Kabul now live in

mosques, schools or badly

scattered apartment buildings.

On the dusty streets,

chaos reigns. At almost every

intersection, a hapless

police officer in a white hat

tries to impose order on the

traffic only to find himself

ignored by man, beast and

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Korean president calls North to stop hostility

Koreans pay tribute to Marshal

By AP

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

South Korean President

Kim Jong-Il

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Local elections delayed in Indian state

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India officials said Wednesday they were delaying polls in the crime-prone eastern state of Bihar for a week following a wave of campaign-related violence, including the murder of a candidate.

Indian Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan decided to defer the state assembly polls in Bihar after "reviewing the law and order situation in the state," the official Election Commission said in a statement.

It said the Bihar elections, originally scheduled to be held on March 5, 7 and 9, would now take place on March 11, 13 and 19.

The Indian government ordered the deployment of nearly 75,000 federal troops in Bihar to oversee the elections, a day after a Communist Party candidate and his bodyguard were gunned down.

Santu Das, a candidate of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), was shot and killed when he arrived for an election meeting in Bihar's Chatra district late Tuesday, the Press Trust of India reported Wednesday.

Bihar Home Secretary J.L. Arya described the killers as "extremists," an official euphemism for the outlawed Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), which has urged voters to boycott the polls.

Mr. Das running for an assembly seat from Chatra, one of 324 constituencies in Bihar, which has the reputation of being India's most lawless state.

He was the second candidate to be murdered. Suspected political rivals earlier killed a candidate of the Congress (I) Party of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Some 25 other people, including party supporters and policemen, have been slain in Bihar since campaigning began last month. Most of the killings have been blamed on Maoist groups.

Officials here said 75,000 troops would be deployed in Bihar to oversee the elections, the largest deployment ever for a state election in India.

A Home Ministry official said 41,500 troops had already reached Bihar, which is India's second most populous state and shares a border with Nepal and the Communist-ruled state of West Bengal.

The Bihar government, controlled by the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party), had sought 120,000 paramilitary troops from New Delhi. Tens of thousands of local police will also be on duty during the voting.

Bihar officials have admitted that they may not be able to provide adequate security at all of the 82,459 polling stations across the sprawling state.

"We will do all we can to ensure peaceful polling in Bihar," the Home Ministry official said.

Bihar is one of six Indian states electing new legislatures in February and March. The polls are considered crucial for Prime Minister Rao, whose Congress Party is widely expected to lose in Bihar, where 8,400 candidates are vying for 323 seats in the state assembly.

The MCC and another Maoist group have urged Biharis to boycott the polls, calling them a "bourgeois." But other leftist groups are taking part.

Meanwhile, elections may be held in Kashmir before July 18 to elect the first local government in five years, the administration of the troubled Indian state said in remarks published Wednesday.

Governor K.V. Krishna Rao told a meeting of political leaders and prominent citizens in the Kashmir winter capital Jammu Tuesday that New Delhi was keen to "restore a democratically-elected government in the state," the Pioneer daily said.

Mr. Krishna Rao, a former chief of the Indian army, said the situation in the strife-torn Kashmir Valley is "steadily improving and this should create confidence among the people to express their will without fear."

The Indian authorities have repeatedly vowed to hold elections in the northern state, which has been administered directly by New Delhi since January 1990. But it is the first time a possible deadline has been sounded.



Polish Parliament Speaker Jozef Oleksy meets the media after the conference with members of the coalition government of the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and the Democratic Left.

PARIS (AFP) — The coalition parties decided on forming a new government with Mr. Oleksy as designated new prime minister (AFP photo)

PARIS (AFP) — French prime minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur faced mounting pressure to disclose his personal wealth Wednesday, amid calls for all candidates to reveal their holding to the public to allay suspicion of wrongdoing.

Balladur rebuffs calls to reveal wealth; Emmanuelli on trial

PARIS (AFP) — French prime minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur faced mounting pressure to disclose his personal wealth Wednesday, amid calls for all candidates to reveal their holding to the public to allay suspicion of wrongdoing.

His campaign spokesman Nicolas Sarkozy said however that Mr. Balladur was "unlikely" to publish such information, saying it would amount to "exhibitionism."

"We should not confuse openness with exhibitionism," he said, declining any further comment on the issue.

On Tuesday far-right candidate Philippe De Villiers explicitly called for all candidates in the forthcoming ballots to publish details of their assets to counter concern over corruption.

Meanwhile French Socialist Party leader Henri Emmanuelli will go on trial here Thursday for an illegal party financing racket that marked the declining years of the Socialist government, but also led to the exposure of corruption across the political spectrum.

The main leftwing candidate for the April-May ballots, Socialist Lionel Jospin, made a point of declaring his worldly wealth when presenting his campaign team last month.

It consisted of a Renault 19 and a Peugeot 605. The Socialist Party candidate said he owns no property, nor stocks and shares.

Mr. Balladur's presidential campaign has been undermined by widespread investigations into corruption and illegal financing involving parties and ministers in his center-right coalition government.

Three ministers have already been forced to resign over corruption scandals.

Mr. Balladur has failed to dispel questions about a substantial monthly salary he received between 1988 and 1993 from a company whose privatisation he facilitated.

Although the payments from the company, GSI, a data-processing services company, were not illegal, his spokesmen have never clarified what he did to earn the salary, or explained an earlier

denial that he had links with the company at the time.

He was reportedly paid

100,000 francs (about \$20,000) a month.

Under French law all candidates for the presidency have to provide details of their personal assets, but it is not made public. Under new corruption laws all MPs also have to make a similar private declaration.

Apart from Mr. Jospin, none of the other candidates in the elections to replace Socialist head of state Francois Mitterrand, including Mr. Balladur's main right-wing rival, Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, has yet published details of their wealth.

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Mr. Balladur's presidential campaign has been undermined by widespread investigations into corruption and illegal financing involving parties and ministers in his center-right coalition government.

Three ministers have already been forced to resign over corruption scandals.

Mr. Balladur has failed to dispel questions about a substantial monthly salary he received between 1988 and 1993 from a company whose privatisation he facilitated.

Although the payments from the company, GSI, a data-processing services company, were not illegal, his spokesmen have never clarified what he did to earn the salary, or explained an earlier

denial that he had links with the company at the time.

He was reportedly paid

100,000 francs (about \$20,000) a month.

Under French law all

candidates for the presi

Jordan Times

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Separation incurs costs

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to go ahead at full speed with his decision to separate Israelis from Palestinians found an added expression when Rabin told his cabinet a few days ago that there are already 59,000 foreign (non-Palestinian) workers and another 11,000 are expected to arrive soon to replace Palestinian labourers working in Israel. At the height of cooperation between the two sides there were no less than 120,000 Palestinians earning their livelihood within Israel. In the wake of last month's Beit Lid bombing, however, the number dwindled to about 15,000. No wonder living standards in the Gaza Strip dropped by 25 per cent in the last six months alone.

The main beneficiary of all these changes on the employment scene is of course Hamas and other anti-negotiations organisations operating in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The new economic hardships in the Palestinian territories have obviously compounded the longstanding economic woes of the Palestinian people and made the socio-economic climate favourable to more and greater violence.

Granted that the Palestinian dependence on Israel for either employment or commerce and trade has never been healthy or viable. But sooner or later this inter-dependence could not go on for ever anyway. The Palestinians can no longer claim a legitimate right to seek work and business opportunities within Israel since they are opting for independence. On the other hand, normal economic relations between the two sides would materialise only after Palestinian political rights have been satisfied.

The interim period is obviously the most painful since this is the time when economic pressures on the people need to ease.

Thus all parties which have a vested interest in the success of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks are called upon to help in alleviating the terrible conditions that exist now. Israel has decided to transfer a small amount to the Palestinian side as an emergency grant to lessen the impact of its decision to wean itself away from dependence on Palestinian labour. Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid has proposed that his government give the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) \$333 million annually for this purpose. This would not be just Israeli charity but a token compensation to the Palestinians who have helped construct the Israeli economy for many years. There are other ideas floating in the area about establishing joint Israeli-Palestinian labour-intensive industries on their "frontiers." Whatever the panacea could be to this new negative development, more concerted efforts need to be made to stop and reverse the additional economic burdens on the Palestinian side so that peace between the two sides would have a chance to succeed.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE AMERICANS are trying by all means to perpetuate the U.N. sanctions on Iraq, which has already implemented all U.N. Security Council resolutions, simply to satisfy U.S. selfish interests, said Ibrahim Al Absi, a writer in Al Ra'i daily. The U.S. administration is now claiming that Iraq possesses biological weapons and that it commits human rights abuses, which, in Washington's views, warrant the continuation of the embargo, said the writer. To back its views, the U.S. administration has sent out its U.N. ambassador around the world to convince governments of its views before the time comes for the Security Council to review the sanctions by mid-March, continued the writer. The United States, added the writer, is not satisfied with four years of sufferings inflicted on the Iraqi people, and not satisfied by Iraq's implementation of all U.N. resolutions, including the recognition of Kuwait's borders and sovereignty.

THE AMERICANS and the Israelis like to describe the coming tour in the Middle East region by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher as part of Washington's drive to give impetus to the peace process. But in reality, this process does not exist any more in light of Israel's actions, according to Taher Al Adwan in Al Deslour. To abort Mr. Christopher's mission before it begins, the Israeli resorted to maintaining a blockade on Lebanese ports and a siege on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said the writer. In the peace process, the U.S. secretary of state is unlikely to achieve any success and could rather seek to freeze the peace process for the time-being until probably after the Israeli parliamentary elections, said the writer.

The View from Academah

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

Formal traffic education: a task greatly neglected

THERE IS no doubt that the formal traffic education that learners undergo, or ought to undergo, before they obtain the driver's license can make a difference when and if handled properly. The more effective the education is, I believe, the better the quality of motoring will be. As things stand at present, however, formal traffic education in our part of the world, a task which the private drivers' training centres are expected to carry out, is both greatly neglected and abused.

All persons wishing to obtain a driver's license are required to take formal lessons at any of the many private centres. The lessons are, or are supposed to be, both theoretical and practical. With respect to the former, learners are required to receive 10 hours of instruction about the various aspects of motoring and the road situation. Specialists at the said centres are to teach the learners the rules, regulations and laws of traffic, and they are to teach them in a way which compels the learners not only to "know" but to value what they learn. In addition to the 10 hours of theoretical instruction, there is, of course, the practical training. The purpose behind the latter is not only to teach learners how to start the engine, steer, shift, break and poll over but also to apply what they have studied during the 10 hours.

Unfortunately, very little of this actually materialises. A small minority of centres takes the theoretical part of the training seriously. Most centres either pay lip-service to the task or ignore it entirely. I have spoken with over 25 people who have recently gone through the process of obtaining the license. Five of them said they took one lesson only. They went to the centre, they said, were told to pay JD 10 (the fee for the theoretical training), were taken into a room for about 50 minutes during which a person came and talked to them about traffic rules, were then informed that they did not have to attend the rest of the lessons should they choose not to for they could teach themselves at their convenience. The other 20 told me they did not take any

theoretical lessons. They paid the JD 10 and started the practical training right away.

I understand perfectly the value and importance of self-learning and self-teaching. A person does not have to go to a centre to learn and learn to respect the regulations, rules and laws of traffic. All one has to do is to obtain the booklet, sit down and read. Easy and straightforward, right? Well, yes and no. Yes, when we feel confident that learners will in fact take this simple assignment to heart, will actually read, attempt to understand and value; and no, when we feel that they won't. In the case of individuals in our society, my guess is that most of them cannot be trusted to rely on themselves in this matter. While some are truly committed, most are too careless to devote enough time and effort. Generally, people in our society have not been trained either to rely on themselves or to take written material seriously. We are too reliant on teachers and instructors and oral discourse to read and learn effectively on our own. What happens is what has happened in the case of the 25 persons I have spoken to: they memorise the road signs and answers to questions in the written test, questions and answers they obtain from those who have taken the test.

But this is not what bothers me most here. The most upsetting thing about the centres' neglect of theoretical education has to do with the implications of their act. Not only are they breaching and violating a crucial trust and a crucial service and function, but they are abusing the learners and corruption them. What lessons are they teaching them when they take the JD 10 and "exempt" them from the learning? What values? What ethics? Are not they teaching them that rules, regulations and laws are to be simply disregarded and ignored? Is not this a subversive act on part of these centres? Is not this destructive? Is not this a major cause of the bad traffic situation we are presently experiencing?

What happens on the road, when the learner embarks on the practical part of the training, is not any better. In the

vast majority of cases, the training is purely and entirely technical. This is good, of course. We do expect our future drivers to be in full control when they are behind the wheel: to know how to steer well, how to make a U-turn swiftly and skilfully, how to shift gears smoothly, etc. And to tell the truth, most of our trainers do a good job at this level. They are all skillful motorists and they know what one ought to do to drive skilfully.

But this is not enough. The purpose behind taking the learner on the road is, in addition to the technical training, to teach him or her to recognise and obey the various regulations and rules. A learner is supposed to learn to stop when he/she comes to a stop sign, to give the right of way when he/she comes to an intersection, to stay in his/her lane and signal when changing lanes, to recognise the presence and right of other road users. Hardly any of this happens. Only three of the 25 learners I spoke with said their trainers paid significant attention to road ethics and rules. The vast majority told me their trainers did not draw their attention to any road regulations or laws. This is not surprising, for if the centre ignores the theoretical part of the process, why should the trainer bother about it?

Clearly, part of the solution lies in making the centres teach the theoretical part. The authorities concerned must find ways of putting these centres under surveillance to make sure they do instruct for the whole period after they collect the JD 10. We cannot leave the matter to the discretion or conscience of those in charge of these centres, many of whom seem to have no discretion and no conscience. The authorities must also find ways of pressuring centres to pressure trainers to teach regulations and rules on the spot. I am sure our authorities know exactly what to do to make centres and trainers observe and behave.

What we teach is what we get, and when we do not do our homework faithfully and ably, the concerned authorities must make sure that we do.

Chechenya crisis shakes up Russian political scene

By Timothy Heritage
Reuters

MOSCOW — The Chechenya debacle has radically altered Russia's political landscape, plunging the main democratic party into crisis and deepening splits among already fragmented factions.

Now, as Russia's parties gear up for parliamentary elections next December, a bewildering array of possible coalitions has appeared because Chechenya has broken old alliances, created new ones and shifted the natural fault lines in parliament.

Ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky has become an unlikely ally of President Boris Yeltsin by supporting the military intervention while Yegor Gaidar, a liberal and long-time Yeltsin supporter, has split with the Kremlin chief.

Russian politics is now more than a question of Democrats against Com-

munists or liberals against conservatives. The Chechenya crisis has become a defining point for party relations.

The Chechen war dramatically transformed the constellation of Russia's political forces," Michael McFaull, an analyst at the independent Moscow Carnegie Centre thinktank, said.

Not surprisingly, political analysts are hedging their bets on who will win the election to the state Duma, the lower house, or the presidential election expected in June 1996.

But many agree that Russia's Choice, the leading democratic party, has been the big loser.

"There is a split in the democratic camp. And through its reaction to Chechenya, Russia's Choice has started to lose popularity and voters," Mark Urov, head of the Analytical Centre, told Reuters.

"It started to lose badly

at the moment when (party leader) Yegor Gaidar went into sharp and open opposition to the president," said Mr. Urov, whose centre provides the Kremlin with analytical reports on wide-ranging issues.

Mr. Gaidar's break with Mr. Yeltsin in December divided the party. Some prominent members, such as wealthy businessman Oleg Borko and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, quit over the rift.

It also removed Mr. Yeltsin's most loyal support in parliament and threw the party's election strategy into confusion. Russia's Choice had counted on Mr. Yeltsin's support in the December election in exchange for offering to back him in the presidential poll.

The party's leaders play down the problems. "No one can win from the situation in Chechenya and I have been happy with the party's standing in recent opinion polls," said Sergei Yushenkov, one of the par-

ty's leading lights.

But a Russia's Choice insider said: "The party is in chaos."

Some commentators saw the democratic parties' opposition to the Chechenya crisis as an opportunity for them to unite, but this has not proved to be the case.

Russia's Choice and other democratic groups,

such as the Yabloko Frac-

tion led by economist Grigory Yavlinsky, remain di-

vided — largely because of

personal ambitions and a

traditional inability to join

forces.

Failing to contest elec-

tions on a joint platform

could water down the refor-

mers' presence in parlia-

ment because some liberal

parties are likely to fail on

their own to muster the five

per cent of votes needed to

take up seats.

"In the democratic camp

there is a lack of unity and

coordination of actions,"

said Sergei Filatov, head of

Mr. Yeltsin's presidential

administration. "The danger of such a situation for the democratic development of the country is obvious."

Hoping to cash in will be Mr. Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), which won almost 25 per cent of the votes in the last election to the Duma in December 1993.

The LDPR remains a force to be reckoned with. But most commentators expect it to receive fewer votes in 1993 because Mr. Zhirinovsky is no longer a novelty and the Chechenya conflict has not inspired a mass outburst of nationalism.

Mr. Zhirinovsky's support for Mr. Yeltsin on Chechenya is also probably only a passing phase. A firm alliance with such an outspoken nationalist looks out of the question.

Many commentators say that although the political scene has been shaken up, there are no clear obvious winners and the final result may be no dramatic changes.

Choose employment and then work together for it

By Michel Hansen

GENEVA — The world is in the midst of the worst employment crisis since the Great Depression. The crisis affects industrialised, transitioning and developing countries alike. Thirty per cent of the global labour force, some 820 million men and women, are affected by unemployment and underemployment. Job insecurity is increasing everywhere.

Yet a disturbing level of indifference and passivity prevails in world opinion, reinforced by constant gloomy diagnoses and prognoses that highlight the job-destroying effects of new technology and global economic competition.

It is time to snap out of this needless and damaging pessimism and to search for constructive solutions. Much can be done through a combination of international and national actions.

The current employment crisis is not a predetermined consequence of uncontrollable economic forces. It is the result of commissions or omissions in economic and social policies and shortcomings in institutional arrangements, all of which can be improved.

What is necessary is to reinstate full employment as a major policy objective. The weakening of the commitment to full employment in the last two decades has contributed to the worsening of employment conditions by reducing the effort and attention devoted to the problem.

The top priority has to be creation of a more conducive framework for higher rates of economic growth and job creation in the global economy. A core re-

quirement is consolidation of progress towards an open and stable system of international trade and investment flows. Properly managed, this can provide a powerful engine for growth and job creation that brings benefits to all countries.

Increased economic competition and new technologies do destroy jobs, but they also create millions of new jobs in activities which did not exist a few decades ago. Moreover, trade and investment are not a zero-sum game, but generate mutual benefits in terms of market expansion and a more efficient international division of labour. These lead to higher rates of growth and job creation.

The potential gains from trade cannot be achieved without national policies designed to respond to new opportunities.

Labour market performance has deteriorated in all OECD countries, irrespective of differences in regulation.

This is not to say that the regulatory status quo should be defended myopically. Some adjustments need to be made — to rules governing the length and organisation of working time, to unemployment benefit systems, to nonwage labour costs. But the very real benefits of labour market regulation must be recognised.

It is imperative to develop an appropriate international framework to ensure that the economic and social objectives in a global economy are examined and pursued in a coherent way. The problems of recent years have shown how badly such a framework is

needed.

A unique opportunity to start moving in this direction will be the World Summit for Social Development next month in Copenhagen. The International Labour Office (ILO) will seek a renewed collective commitment to the goal of full, productive and freely chosen employment, backed up by a firm plan of action. We do not need new institutions, but we do need to make better, more coordinated use of existing institutions.

While the benefits of a market economy are indisputable, total laissez-faire will ensure neither stable growth nor equity. And exclusive pursuit of strictly economic objectives without regard to their social consequences will not serve to overcome employment.

Blanket deregulation of labour markets is unlikely to resolve unemployment. Labour market performance has deteriorated in all OECD countries, irrespective of differences in regulation.

This is not to say that the regulatory status quo should be defended myopically. Some adjustments need to be made — to rules governing the length and organisation of working time, to unemployment benefit systems, to nonwage labour costs. But the very real benefits of labour market regulation must be recognised.

The writer is director general of the International Labour Office (ILO). The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

AUA in Aqaba

To the Editor:

GIVING Amman University of Amman (AUA) a chance makes sense — in Aqaba. In addition to the compatibility in the initials, Aqaba meets most of the requirements the university would need to survive.

No news, good news

By Jean-Claude Elias

The last computer show, organised by the American embassy in Amman and which took place last week at the Philadelphia Hotel, did nothing but confirm the impression we had at the previous Jordan Technology Show — nothing really new in the computer world.

I can easily imagine how readers can be shocked by such a statement. Haven't I heard of CD-ROMS and colour laser printers? What about the Internet and the Information Super Highway?

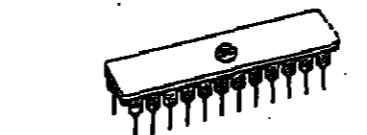
To set the record straight, I must first admit that the show was very professionally prepared. Though confined in a relatively small area, it was pleasant and very business-like. One of the best I have seen.

Of the 20 exhibitors or so, five were not specialised computer companies. A clear indication that Information Technology hardware could not fill the place by itself. A soft drink maker, a car rental company, a courier service company, a satellite vendor and a radio paging organisation were presenting their products.

Well, CD-ROMS are not a novelty anymore and colour laser printers have been around since 1992. So much for the hardware. Of course, the Pentium PC is the latest trend in computing power and speed but most users in Jordan seem quite happy with their 486-DX2-66 machines for the time being, given the price of the Pentium is still a little high for the local market. Users would beef up their existing 486 computer with more memory and disk storage rather than buying a completely new Pentium PC model.

As far as the Internet and the Information Super Highway are concerned, yes, they are relatively new. It is worth however remembering that they are software and not hardware products. The Internet is

chip talk



already available in the country to anyone who wishes to subscribe. Currently, the local representative can only offer batch processing and off-line service, that is electronic mail that is not immediately transmitted. All messages are stored on a computer's hard disk and then processed, as a batch, twice a day. The on-line service has been promised for summer. The off-line service is reasonably priced. Let's wait to see how the on-line processing would be. We still have to wait for the actual Super Highway that seems in its experimental stage yet, even in the West.

The bottom line is that, apart from a couple of major hardware improvements, the most influential innovations in the last two years were on the software front. The release of Microsoft Office package (word processing, spreadsheets, data base and communication) and its Arabised equivalent, consolidated by the introduction of the new MS-DOS 6.22, have done more than any piece of hardware to change the shape of personal computing. And this is only one example.

Analysts used to say that software is so much more important than hardware that one day will come when hardware is given free-of-charge with software. Perhaps this day will come sooner than expected.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, March 2

1:30 Animated Classics — Slabed

2:00 Feature Film — Herbie Goes To Monte Carlo

Starring: Dean Jones & Don Knotts

Herbie the VW falls in love with a sports car as they compete in a race from Paris to Monte Carlo. There are a lot of laughs in this one.

3:30 Football Match

FC Barcelona vs Paris St. Germain

7:30 Road To Avonlea

Sara tries to succeed at playing matchmaker to one of her relatives and a shabby-looking man when she gets suddenly taken aback by a painful fact.

8:30 Documentary — The Blue Revolution

An enthralling series on the political and green issues of our blue underworld, the distressed deep.

9:10 The Hat Squad

The Hat Squad is called to protect one of the DEA's most valuable agents, a drug-sniffing dog, when the leader of a cocaine ring puts out a \$25,000 contract on the animal's life.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Shirley Bassey In Concert

11:20 Bangkok Hilton

Friday, March 3

7:30 Street Hawk

8:15 Desmond's

8:50 You Bet Your Life

9:10 Grand Slam

10:00 News In English

10:20 B.B. King / The Blues Summit

11:20 Feature Film — Shoot

Starring: James 'Walters, Heather Graham & J. Travolta

Saturday, March 4

1:30 Animated Classics — Beauty & The Beast

2:00 Feature Film — The Last Flight Of Noah's Ark

Starring: Elliott Gould & Genevieve Bujold

A story of an unemployed pilot who, against his better judgement, agrees to fly a plane full of farm animals to a Pacific island for a young missionary.

7:30 Road To Avonlea

8:20 A New Series

9:10 The Cape Rebel

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Leave Of Absence

Starring: Brian Dennehy & Blythe Danner

A man decides to make up for the great suffering he has caused to his wife but only after he learns how to pay the price so dearly.

12:00 The Maid Of Orleans (Opera)

Sunday, March 5

1:30 Animated Classics — Aladdin

2:30 My Secret Identity

If something is of no interest to me, I don't see it! But...

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

One fundamental aspect of a city is its potential to either civilise or brutalise. Unfortunately, Amman, now, fails to provide a basic healthy and civilising environment for its inhabitants.

If cities can only reflect the values and character of the people that live in them, then sadly enough, Amman has become a true consumerist and materialistic town.

Failing to teach children about the environment leaves them ill-equipped to participate in the process of respecting and improving the city that so critically affects their future life. In France, for example, "culture" is the fourth highest voting issue. But where does it rank for us? I am one of the lucky few who, when they feel the squeeze of Amman, can escape to the humanising spaces of the Place Beauvau, La Defense of Paris and the squares and parks of London. Yet still, people wonder why I like to go off to those places every few months.

I enjoy the animation that pavement cafes bring to the street, the informal liveliness of the public square, the mixture of shops, offices and homes, that makes a living neighbourhood.

At a time when Paris doubles its pedestrian areas on the Champs Elysees, and when London is increasing the pedestrian space on Oxford Street, at the expense of traffic, we, as befits our callous materialistic nature, take from our sidewalks, and ultimately from pedestrians, and give to the streets and cars.

This has got to stop. We should without hesitation pedestrianise downtown, Sweifich, Um-Umairah and any other commercial pockets that we have created over the past few years. We can, and should, provide the people with the open space in which they can be human again; space that beams with life, be it cafes, street art, carnivals. We owe it to ourselves and to our children.

Yet we have to bear in mind that because modern Amman is a fairly young city, we have missed the opportunity to turn it into a healthy, lively and an

open-minded city. Regrettably, we continue to fail to re-interpret and re-invent the dense and diverse urban city. Accordingly, we are all guilty.

As a result of our actions, and even more our inaction, Amman has become socially divisive and environmentally hazardous. The car has enabled its citizens to drive, and so live, away from its centre. But when a city, any city, spreads out, as Amman clearly has, it becomes uneconomic to expand public transport systems, except with cheaper fuel and so at the expense of clean air, which still fail to provide an alternative to driving. So the car, and all the havoc associated with it, reigns supreme.

We should not let reason and reflection control our unconscious expressions. Take this story for example: Once upon a time there was a centipede that was amazingly good at dancing with all hundred legs. All the creatures of the forest were impressed with the exquisite dance. All except a tortoise that is. How can I get the centipede to stop dancing? Thought the tortoise. He couldn't just say he didn't like the dance. Neither could he say he danced better himself, that would obviously be untrue. So he devised a devilish plan.

"I am a devoted admirer of your dancing. I must know how you go about it when you dance. Is it that you lift your left leg number 28 and then your right leg number 39? Or do you begin by lifting your right leg number 17 before you lift your left leg number 44? I await your answer." When the centipede read the letter, she immediately began to think about what she did when she danced. Which leg did she lift first? And which leg next? And she never danced again.

That's the way it goes when imagination gets strangled by reasoned deliberation. My words should not embarrass us. We are not related to the ostrich. We can fulfill the words "tell me how you live and I will tell you who you are." It is a mere bagatelle.

This piece is written for Shireen to remind her that we create our own life.

The story of the centipede was a present from Alberto Knox and Sophie Amundsen c/o Sophie's World.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuaqir

FANTASTIC FACTS

* British General James L'Amy was absent from Jamaica for a few days and in his absence his fiancée was pronounced dead from the dread Yellow Fever. She was buried in the family mausoleum. On his return the distraught general insisted that he see her beloved's face for the last time. As he did he saw a flicker of life. After a few sips of brandy she revived — and survived as his wife for another 41 years!!

★ ★ ★ ★

* Eccentric American millionaire William Randolph Hearst, was so fond of telephones that he had them fitted all over his house — and even in the gardens. Many were concealed in tree trunks!

★ ★ ★ ★

* If you were getting married many years ago in Europe, you would probably have been given an onion as a present! A long time ago, onions were considered very valuable. If you died 5,000 years ago in Egypt, you would have had the inside of your tomb decorated with paintings of onions. The Egyptians also used an onion to swear an oath. The onion takes its name from the Latin word "unio" which means "large pearl."

★ ★ ★ ★

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

— Be so good as to forgive me.

Takarram wa'sameehuni.

— May I speak freely?

Hal tasnah an atakalam be-hurriya?

— I do not meddle with such things.

La atadak'hal be-ommoor kabazehi.

— I beg your indulgence.

Arjook an tatasahal.

— It's all my fault.

Al-zanbo zanbi.

— Please forgive my thoughtlessness.

Arjoo an tashfi' leh taishee.

— What a misfortune!

Ya laha min maseeha!

— It's a heart-rending sight!

Imabu manzil tatafatat lehawli al-skibad.

— It's a dastardly act!

Imabu amalon khasis.

— It cannot be helped.

Ma bel-yad heela.

— Great God! Have mercy upon me.

Ya Allah ya Azim, Irtaham!

★ ★ ★ ★

PUZZLES

(A) ADD FOR A ADAGE:

Can you, by taking three consecutive letters from each of the following words, make up a well-known proverb?

MACADAM — CHRISTMAS — NYLON — HOOKAH — MISTAKE — TWINING

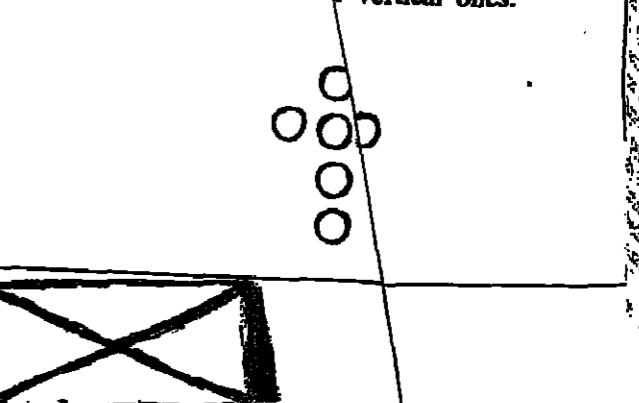
★ ★ ★ ★

(B) SIMPLICITY ITSELF

Here is the other error I want to correct.

This diagram represents six coins in the form of a cross.

What you are required to do is to re-arrange the coins, still in the form of a cross, so that there are four horizontal and four vertical ones.



* What did the calculator say to the mathematician?

— You can count on me!

Vienna's Opera Ball — an institution returns

By Arno Makowsky

The boxes were empty for years but now society and business are making contacts again at the city's biggest party

VIENNA — Where on earth are my cufflinks, for heaven's sake? It can't be true. The Opera Ball begins in 20 minutes, the debutants have downed their tiaras, the white limousine is waiting outside and now no cufflinks.

What now? Roll up the sleeves inside the arms of the tailcoat? The lady at hotel reception can't help unfortunately, because she's just sewing on a couple of orders for a gentleman. Right, quickly over to the opera shop, where they're prepared for all emergencies, and where spontaneous ball guests can even rent a ballgown an hour before it begins. Oh well, there's nothing like a safety pin.

Degeneration of manners is unstoppable, as becomes clear later. The charmer from box number nine weaves over to a lady in violet coloured evening dress, and grabs her arm familiarly, rasping "I kiss your hand fair lady" (a traditional Viennese address). How embarrassing! Part of the etiquette you have to know before the Vienna Opera Ball is that firstly, when kissing a lady's hand, you do not actually kiss it, but stop two centimetres short of the back of her hand, so that the most she senses is your breath. And secondly, you definitely shouldn't say anything about "my fair lady" but introduce yourself correctly with a bow.

Perhaps Mr. Elmayer of the famous Viennese Elmayer Dancing School is right when he complains that young people today scarcely know how to behave on such grand social occasions. He was forced to observe chewing gum flying out of the mouth of an enthusiastic young dancer.

That is bad, but not really surprising, after all the Opera Ball has lost most of its renown, or so we hear. In recent years it was far from a sell-out, the expensive boxes in par-

ticular. Demonstrators even stayed away. What remains of the dazzling of the greatest attraction in Vienna's social calendar, of the dazzling of what some see as one of the country's greatest institutions.

The first impression is shocking — some guests have actually had the nerve to turn up in dinner jackets. Wearing a dinner jacket to the Opera Ball is a bit like appearing on the terraces at FC Bayern dressed like a Munich 1860 football fan. Although Opera Ball organiser Lotte Tobisch had smiled understandingly, saying "If you have no white tie and tails, you can come in a dinner jacket. But you mustn't be surprised if people try to order champagne from you."

Now there may certainly be wallabies who will have had to go to a costume hire to rent his outfit for the night. But even that shows style! After all it costs 415 marks (about \$270) to hire tails, waistcoat, shirt and patent leather shoes — and the happy feeling of for once belonging to those who throw money around prettily senselessly. On the other hand this expense hardly counts if you consider the other prices: tickets cost 370 marks (about \$220) each and are thus relatively cheap. But those who want to sit with their friends in an exclusive box in the upper circle must pay an additional 23,500 marks (around \$15,600). But anyone who is anyone is there. "If I go to the Viennese Opera Ball," the newspaper Wiener Kurier quotes a famous millionaire, "I can save myself 30 business trips."

It seems that this kind of social and business networking still works splendidly. For newcomers too. "The famous, the snobs, the whole atmosphere — somehow it's really great," enthuses 18-year-old debutant Mathias.

Walser. And his 19-year-old dancing partner Anja Simbrunner says: "I think it's simply a gas!" More than 800 couples had to dance a waltz when they applied for tickets last December — dancing anticlockwise of course. And 180 of these were finally accepted into the "opening committee."

The riot police and their batons on the Opera Square are bored. Gone are the days when there was rioting in Kaerntner Street and demonstrators chanted things like: "They're dancing at the Opera Ball and scheming for our downfall!" The days in 1987, when the leading German politician Franz Josef Strauss sat in a box sipping champagne with Kurt Waldheim, while outside the demonstrators chanted slogans against the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant planned for Wackersdorf in Germany. Nowadays, says Lotte Tobisch, there are no longer any grounds for protest. "The Opera Ball is an anachronistic fairy tale. Turning it into a political issue is ridiculous."

Let's turn back to the marble ballroom, to the marble stairway, which Sophia Loren is just graciously ascending, triggering a kind of collective ecstasy.

As far as the two debas Anja and Mathias are concerned — by the way, Tobisch thinks "Those two are simply gorgeous" — they both believe that terms like "tradition" and "society" have a positive ring. Anja's father is a professor of medicine, Mathias's family is in the drink business. Theirs is an old family-run company of venerable tradition that makes a famous herb-liqueur. One resides in the fashionable 18th District and one's father says things like: "Yes, we're proud to be Viennese."

Mathias and Anja are both studying business in their first semester. Their fellow students also think it's great that they are debutants at Vienna's Opera Ball, and their relatives are thrilled. Have they got any idea why someone might demonstrate against the Opera Ball? No, says Anja, until now, she'd never given the matter any thought. And Mathias says: "That's just envy, it's the only explanation I can think of."

A glance from the window of the marble hall of the Vienna Opera House indicates that the expected demonstration has failed to materialise yet again. That goes for dancing in general. The debutants have it hammered into

strategies and innovation, take us to the real question of the evening: is the Viennese Opera Ball still the ultimate event on the social calendar at which the international jet set and nobility meet to move in time with the rhythm?

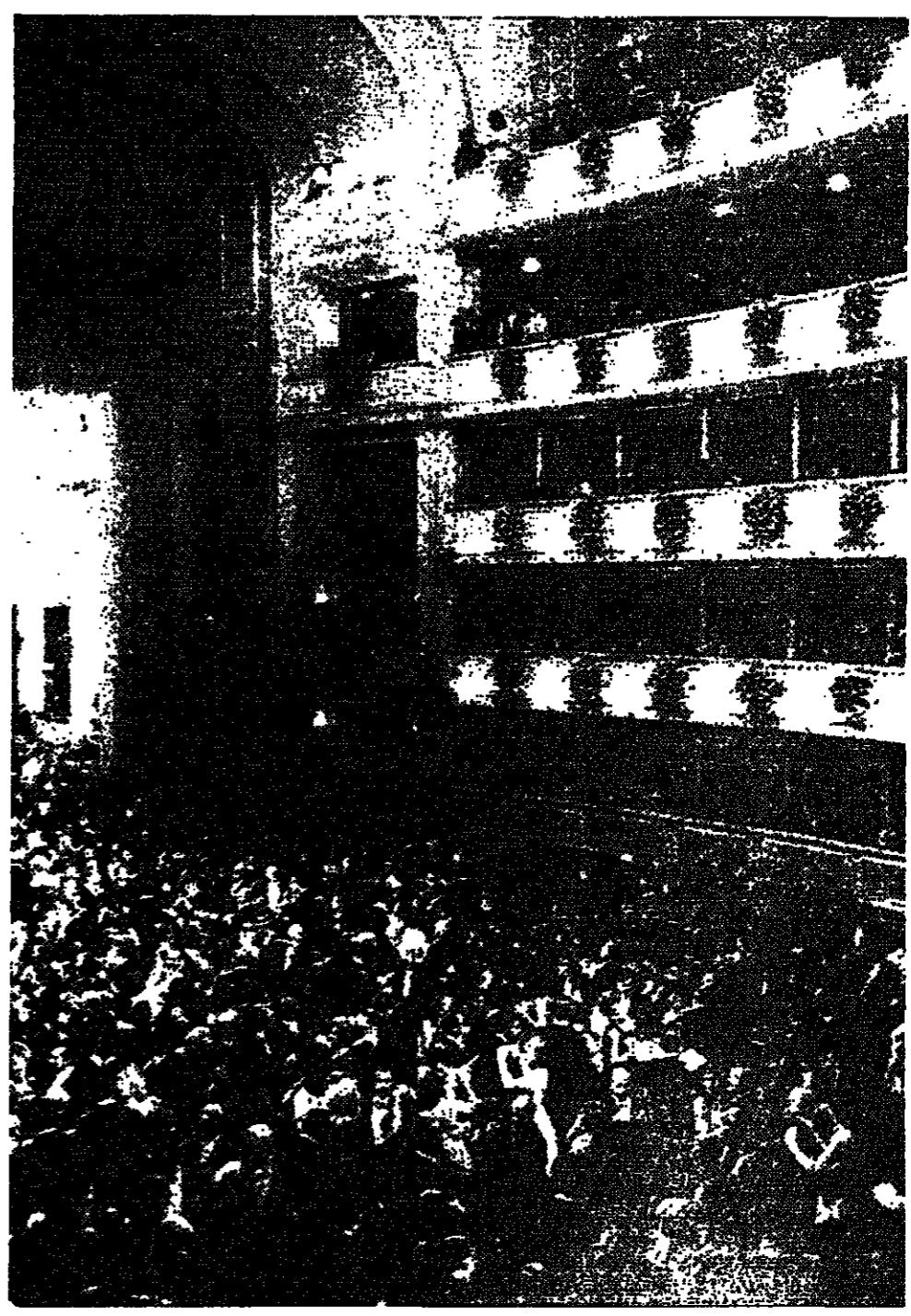
Or has the ball mutated into just another ritual for Japanese and Austrian software manufacturers and nouveau riche businessmen? And — just to exaggerate the question and give it a jet set touch — is all this public posing still "in"? It's a well known fact, that in times of recession you can't even rely on the superrich. And if it weren't for Mr. Lugner and his charter-guests things would not just have looked gloomy in terms of hangers-on, but also regarding famous guests.

But this year everything is different. Everything is sold out! Placido Domingo is there, Austrian President Thomas Klestil, Shirley MacLaine and never mind world stars like Uschi Glas and Helmut Fischer. "You can feel that things are looking up." By the way, Mrs. Tobisch is a remarkable woman, and not just because she used to be an actress at the famous Burgtheatre, before she made the role of "Lady of the Opera Ball" — as the newspaper Neue Kronen Zeitung puts it — her own. She has defended the spectacle ever since with the most beautiful arguments: "Tails aren't elitist, they're egalitarian. Everybody who wears them looks the same."

If needs be she'll even tangle with prominent members of Viennese society like the director of the opera Joan Holender, who said last year that the Opera Ball had become superstitious. In such instances she points out that the Opera Ball is "the only day in the year when the Opera doesn't make a loss."

But anyone who asks her for the honour of a dance, gets the answer: "I'm sorry waltzing makes me ill."

That goes for dancing in general. The debutants have it hammered into



The famous Opera Ball reclaims its place as Vienna's biggest party (file photo)

them during rehearsals that the ladies have to set off again on his right foot, placing it between the feet of the lady."

And so they dance on through the night. And some people really do feel ill, whether from the waltz or from the clouds of perfume or from the "Taittinger Comte De La Champagne" that sells for 4,600 schillings (more than \$110,000) — the way Richard Burton once did. As the Viennese press tactfully reported at the time, "when he leaned over the balustrade, it was not without consequence for the dancers below."

The ball lasts until five in the morning and in the afternoon they'll all be sitting in their offices again or in the plane — with their clothes bags for their tails and ball-gown. And virtually none of them will have found their way to the city park where they could have met him, the real king of the waltz. There are the statues of Franz Lehár, Robert Stolz and Johann Strauss or course sculpted as a golden violinist in the midst of gentle elves and nymphs. And by the way, you don't need a ticket to get in — Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

The single-bullet theory of Kevin Bacon's career

By Douglas J. Rowe
The Associated Press

The First.

While drinking a cappuccino with low-fat milk in the mezzanine eatery of a midtown Manhattan hotel, the 36-year-old Bacon still looks lean and boyish. He's reticent, even aloof, not really warming to the knowledge that his interviewer grew up just a short distance from where he did, or only revealing the Connecticut town where the lives on the condition that it doesn't see print.

At that rate, you'd think he might recoil at the suggestion that his career's on a roll — as if you might be jinxing him. But he warms to that topic.

"Sure," he says. "Yeah, it feels good. I'm probably in a better situation than I've ever been in. My career has had a lot of ups and downs. It's been kind of all over the map."



Kevin Bacon

Movies like *Quicksilver*, *The Big Picture* and *Queens Logic* crashed at the box office. From that down phase, only *Tremors*

fared better, but only after the fact, developing a bit of a cult following on video.

"I have this theory that there's times when you are as a person, as you walk down life's road, the age that you're at, the way you look, the things that happen in your life, birth and death, joy and tragedy, and all those things are directly related to what's going on in your work," Bacon says.

"I reached a crossroads, a passage if you will, three-four years ago when I was in my early 30s," he says, explaining that he got married, had children, and made some career changes.

"Some of it was very conscious, but also some of the things just kind of laid in."

"*JFK* was a big turning point in my career, even though it didn't necessarily

feel like it at the time. It had a direct effect on getting *A Few Good Men*. It's had a direct relationship to being involved in *Murder In The First* and *The River Wild* and subsequently *Apollo 13* (his next movie with Tom Hanks).

Bacon feels that his *JFK* role "had a certain resonance," adding: "People just saw something different... It jump-started my career again."

He wasn't surprised he could play it, because he said that from the time he began acting in New York, "I've always been drawn to hard-edged, unusual, sometimes psychotic, sometimes foreign kinds of characters."

He honed his skills off-Broadway. Born in Philadelphia and reared in the Rittenhouse Square area of that city, Bacon was the youngest of six

children. His father, Edmund Bacon once served as the director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

At 17, he moved to New York to study acting while working as a waiter.

His first notable movie role came in 1978's *National Lampoon's Animal House* (he's the guy pancaked while calling for calm during the climactic parade scene), then he played the alienated alcoholic Fenwick in *Diner* before zooming to stardom as the ants-in-his-pants-and-he's-gotta-dance city slicker in 1984's *Footloose*.

At this point, though, Bacon no longer feels that he has to distance himself from that or any other lighter roles he's filled.

"I want to have a really good part. I'm just better if I have a good part. If I don't have a good part,

I'm just not that good," he says matter-of-factly.

From movie to movie, Bacon can display protean qualities, and in his latest outing, he lost some 25 pounds (11.3 kilograms) wore a prosthetic eye piece, and was made up with scars to depict an inmate deformed and deformed by his three years in the solitary confinement of a dungeon.

"It's what I aspire to, and it's what I've worked towards," Bacon says. "Because when I thought about becoming an actor, and when I looked at actors I admired, I thought to myself: the reason I want to do this is because I want to be a bunch of different things. It's not because I want to just be me up there on the screen. I have no interest in being me on the screen. I save me for the people that I love. I'm interested

in being a spaceman or a prisoner or a bad guy or whatever."

The people he saves himself for are his wife, actress Kyra Sedgwick, and their children, 5-year-old Travis and 2-year-old Sosie.

He prefers not to talk much about his family life. "My personal life is not all that interesting, to tell you the truth," he said. "I mean, it's kind of a boring situation: Basically I'm happily married and have two great kids."

And anyway, he thinks what one says can sound so insipid, rather than profound and important, once it appears in print.

"It's like the way that I feel about my wife and kids. How can I put that in a sentence... Poets, songwriters have been trying to write about love for years. And so often they've been completely unsuccessful."

Retrospective celebrates Fellini's fantasy world

By Melanie Goodfellow
Reuter

one of Fellini's dreams, is among the hundreds of his sketches in a major retrospective on the five-times Oscar winner who died in 1993.

Fellini's films, with their chaotic plots, surreal sets and larger-than-life characters, departed from the dour style of neo-realism filmmakers such as Roberto Rossellini.

Fellini thrived on fantasy and the sketches provide an insight into the mind that put Anita

Ekberg in Rome's Trevi Fountain in *La Dolce Vita*, dressed Catholic cardinals in coloured light bulbs for *Roma*, and conjured up the nymphomaniac figure of Volpina in *Amarcord*.

Many of the sketches show scantly-dressed women with oversized breasts and muscular thighs which served as models for the Amazonian sirens he later cast in his films.

The men, by compari-

son, are often scrawny with angst-ridden expressions. In one sketch Fellini shows an anguished Giuseppe Verdi, the 19th century opera composer, staring at four buxom women sitting on the wing of an airplane.

Some of the drawings, such as those featuring Agnelli and Verdi, depict the dreams Fellini recorded on the advice of a German psychoanalyst he met in 1960.

Others include drawings from before he became a director, including some produced for satirical publications and the Funny Face Shop which produced caricatures for allied troops in Rome at the end of World War II.

American actor Anthony Quinn, who played a circus强man alongside Fellini's wife Giulietta Masina in the director's first Oscar-winning film *La Strada*, said Fellini advised him never to tell the truth.

"Once after I had been very earnest in a press conference he said: 'Everyone knows the truth. Tell them something they don't know, tell them your mother's a princess and your father's a giant,'" Quinn said at the exhibition's opening.

"Federico was always dreaming, even when he was awake. He would scribble down his ideas — restaurant owners became furious because he would

wade with Marcello Mastroianni in the cold waters of Rome's Trevi Fountain.

It also includes doodles Fellini drew of Paparazzi, the ferocious street photographers who hounded the starlets and nobility in the film.

The section on *La Strada*, widely acclaimed as Fellini's masterpiece, displays the costume Masina wore in the role of Gelsomina, the half-wit girl with a big heart.

Asian women go under the knife for Western look

EDITOR'S NOTE — In male-dominated Asia, where beauty is a must for women who want to get ahead, cosmetic surgery is a growth industry. From South Korea to the Philippines to Malaysia, women who can afford it are going under the knife.

By Sheila McNulty
The Associated Press

BANGKOK — Makeup artists complained about her slanted eyes and broad nose. Photographers said they couldn't find her best side. Costume designers balked at dressing her.

Her looks were hurting her career as a singer.

Last spring, 24-year-old Naree Krajang finally decided to do something about it. She underwent plastic surgery to remove some of the skin and fatty tissue on her upper eyelids to make her eyes look rounder and put a fold in the lid. The doctor also implanted a piece of sili-

cone on the bridge of her nose to make it look less flat.

"I didn't want others to criticise or insult me anymore," she says.

Fair skin, smaller, folded eyelids and high nose bridges — Caucasians features — have always been considered the basic elements of a beautiful face in Asia.

Now, as Thailand embraces fast-food restaurants, blue jeans and Hollywood movies in its zeal to Westernise, its women are even more determined to attain those attributes. From South Korea to the Philippines to Malaysia, women who

can afford it are going under the knife.

"It's a trend," says Kanjana Spindler, editor in chief of the Thai edition of the women's magazine *Elle*. "You can see all these plastic surgery clinics popping up like mushrooms."

Montana Ratchadamnuen, 30, the owner of a furniture store, had her third nose job recently in one of those clinics. The first one had left the bridge too high and the second one left the silicone implant too visible.

Her nostrils are now lined with stitches and her nose is swollen from her third operation. It will be up to six months before the swelling subsides and she'll know if she likes this latest nose.

"If it's not beautiful, I must get a new one," she

says. "I want to be beautiful."

Her husband, Chot Thammathong, 32, says Montana was beautiful before she started getting nose jobs: "Even the first one was unnecessary."

But Montana, a petite, pleasant-looking woman, thinks he is just being nice. She is considering implants to increase the size of her breasts and surgery on her full, sexy lips to make them smaller.

Although beauty is important throughout Asia, in Thailand it appears to consume many women.

They often refuse to wear motorcycle helmets — in violation of the law — for fear of mudding their hair. Their clothes are never wrinkled and their makeup is always skillfully applied. Many use creams to lighten their skin. And

plastic surgery has become a must among the in-crowd.

"Thais are very vain by nature," Spindler says. "In this country, people always look at the surface and place so much emphasis on outside appearances."

Dr. Thep Vechavat works 12-hour days, seven days a week to disguise the concealed flaws in those appearances. Women often come in groups to undergo the half-hour operations in his tiny operating room.

Dr. Surasak Muang-sombut, head of the Plastic Surgeons Association, says she spent much of his time fixing what untrained surgeons have wrought.

Despite the widespread accounts of botched surgeries, Thai women think the operations are worth the risk. Some believe the proper eyes or nose can literally change their lives.

his patients.

Dr. Surasak Muang-sombut, head of the Plastic Surgeons Association, cautions that there are more than 1,000 untrained doctors performing such operations in Bangkok because Thai law permits anyone with a medical degree to perform surgery.

Countless women have therefore suffered permanent scars, painful infections and even implants that wear a hole in their noses and pop out.

Dr. Surasak says he

spends much of his time fixing what untrained

surgeons have wrought.

Instead of the smaller, unhappy parts that dominated her career in the past, when she always looked sad, the actress says she now is able to get key roles to play happy women who attract men.

"Now I can act sexy," she says.

Although actresses and

singers were the only ones

who could afford the operations when they became popular more than a decade ago, the proliferation of clinics, and resulting competitive prices, has

made the surgery affordable to Thailand's growing middle class.

Dr. Swatana Poksawad says women from all walks of life come to her clinic. Often, she says, mothers encourage their daughters to undergo the operations between high school and college, where they will change friends. She herself performed eyelid and nose surgery on both of her daughters during that transition. She hasn't suggested it, however, to her 18-year-old son.

Thais generally believe

that men don't need to go to such extremes to improve their appearances.

"For women, beauty is first," says Phukulan, a 20-year-old salesman at a major department store. "For me, their character, habits and actions are more important."

Study: Grape juice may be as beneficial as wine in unclogging arteries

By Rob Lever
Agence France Presse

WASHINGTON — Grape juice may be as effective as red wine in preventing clogged arteries, researchers have concluded in a study that may explain why the French have low levels of heart disease despite high fat diets.

The University of Wisconsin study showed it took three times as much grape juice by volume to achieve the same prevent-

tive effects as red wine but it offered a method for protecting against heart disease for people who cannot or do not drink alcohol.

"It's better if we can find the beneficial substance in alcoholic beverages without drinking because it will be safer for a lot of people," said John Folts, the lead researcher in a report published this month in *Circulation*, a journal of the American Heart Association.

"Alcohol abuse is a major problem in this country, and the public perception is always that if two drinks a day is good, then four or five may be better," he added.

Mr. Folts said it was too soon to call for a recommendation to drink grape juice, but said people with heart problems might want to consider it. In general, the darker the beverage, the more flavonoids are present.

Mr. Folts and his colleagues last year reported

that two glasses of red wine a day can inhibit clotting that can lead to coronary thrombosis, a disease of the arteries that can ultimately lead to heart attacks. Other studies have shown moderate alcohol consumption to have a similar effect.

The researchers believed that the beneficial substances in red wine were flavonoids, naturally occurring compounds that reduce the stickiness of blood platelets. Flavonoids are found in the skins, stems and seeds of grape juice, which are removed late in the fermentation process.

Research animals were also tested.

The so-called "French paradox" deals with a series of studies showing the comparatively low rate of heart attacks among the French even though they eat nearly four times as much butter and three times as much lard as Americans.

Despite similarities in factors such as smoking and weight, Americans have a rate of fatal heart attacks 2.5 times as great as the French.

This has been attributed to regular wine consumption by the French, but other theories, including the use of olive oil and other cooking habits in the Mediterranean, also have been explored.

In 1974, Mr. Folts was the first researcher to demonstrate that Aspirin may help reduce the risk of heart attacks by decreasing platelet activity.

In his latest study, he said flavonoids may be even better protection because, unlike Aspirin, their effect is not in-

creased or decreased by stress and other factors that raise adrenaline.

Mr. Folts said flavonoids may be even more effective if they can be dried and produced in pill form.

The research team is currently studying the effect of beer, another beverage with the same anti-clogging substance.

In his latest study, he said flavonoids may be even better protection because, unlike Aspirin, their effect is not in-

Experimental drugs offer promise for reversing bone loss

By Ellen Knickmeyer
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A drug that could become one of the first new treatments for osteoporosis in more than a decade built bone in women with the disease, a study said.

The drug Alendronate

was given to 516 women over three years, producing an average 6.8 percent increase in bone density at the spine, said Merck and Co., which plans next month to submit it for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. It usually takes about 19 months for a company to

win marketing approval. Patients in the trials in 15 countries outside the United States also showed 4.8 percent and 6.9 percent increase at the two spots on the hip most prone to fracture.

"That's pretty substantial," said Richard Gelula of the National Osteopor-

osis Foundation in Washington. "If they can reduce bone loss, that's a fantastic achievement. If they can add some bone density" better yet.

If the drug works, it's good news for the 25 million Americans, many of them women, suffering from the brittle bone disease.

It's even better news that other potential therapies are in the pipeline as well.

"At the moment, we have perhaps one really effective therapy, hormone replacement therapy," said Dr. Ian Reid of the University of Auckland, clinical investigator in the Alendronate trial, who presented his results

at a conference in Melbourne, Australia.

"Patients... have an enormous need for an alternative," he said.

While the hormones Estrogen and Calcitonin have been the only approved forms of treatment since 1984, drugs that may actually stimulate bone growth are in the laboratory along with

Alendronate.

A University of California at San Francisco study released this week showed promising results with a parathyroid hormone.

A four-week trial of the drug on rats with lab-induced osteoporosis showed all the rats regained lost bone mass, and some actually added

extra bone.

"This is really the first real chance we have to actually reverse osteoporosis," said Dr. Nancy Lane, the parathyroid study's lead author.

An early candidate for bone building, sodium fluoride, produced bones that weighed more but also snapped more.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

IN LIKE A LION
By Louis Sabin

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U.S. consensus on foreign policy goals is collapsing

By Martin Walker

THAT THE United States "should take an active part in world affairs" has been axiomatic among Americans for almost 50 years. Whatever other issues divided them, this consensus has held steady. Yet now, this sense of shared purpose is beginning to break down.

Back in 1947, as the cold war was getting under way, 68 per cent of the U.S. public backed an active U.S. role, against 25 per cent who disagreed. Last year, the figures were almost identical with 67 per cent saying yes and 28 per cent saying no.

These figures, from the National Opinion Research Centre, reveal a durable consensus. The proportion of those calling for an active role has never fallen below 65 per cent (in 1980), nor risen higher than 73 per cent (in 1991).

The proportion wanting to stay out of world affairs has never risen above 32 per cent (in 1976 and 1986) nor dropped below 24 per cent (in 1991).

The evidence that something is starting to change is fairly recent. Surveys by the U.S. Information Agency and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and by Newt Gingrich's favourite polisher Frank Luntz, all suggest that the figures are still being processed, suggesting, suddenly, a fast-growing mood of introspection and fatigue with the tiresome world.

"The end of the cold war spawned fears that the U.S. would return to isolationism. Evidence to support those fears is growing," said Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser to President George Bush and Gerald Ford.

"American foreign policy not only has become pas-

sive and diminished, but also more narrow-minded, short-sighted and, increasingly, go-it-alone. In a word, U.S. foreign policy is becoming increasingly 'unilateralist' as well as 'isolationist'."

Yet Bob Zoellick, counsellor in James Baker's state department and the outstanding foreign policy brain in the Bush era, said the real change was in the policy-making elite.

"Go into the small print of all the polls and you find Americans still want to play an international role, and are very clear about our vital interests: The oil of the (Arab) Gulf, stability in Europe and East Asia and the Western hemisphere."

"You find a similar consensus among the elites in the wider civil society outside Washington, the business and banking circles and the non-governmental organisations involved in aid and humanitarian and environmental work. It is among the political and policy elites that the consensus has broken. They are all over the map, and what is striking is the lack of a catalysing leadership — which means the president."

Mr. Zoellick and Mr. Scowcroft, like most Republicans, suggest the Clinton administration is especially to blame. Mr. Scowcroft is particularly critical of Bill Clinton's drift away from the Bosnian arms embargo. "Rather than pick and win a fight with congress, it would abandon unilaterally a policy we had forged with our NATO allies," he said.

Democrats, equally inevitably, tend to blame the Republicans, particularly their new congressmen, almost half of whom have been elected since 1992. They not only have no

memory of the cold war; even the Gulf war was over before they came to Washington.

"The imperative of American leadership is a central lesson of our times," the secretary of state, Warren Christopher, told them last month.

"Imagine what the world would have been like without it in just the last two years alone. We might now have four nuclear states in the former Soviet Union instead of one. We might have no GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) or NAFTA (North American Free Trade Area). We might have brutal dictators still terrorising Haiti. And we might very well have Iraqi troops back in Kuwait."

The broken consensus is also plain in institutions such as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), where Henry Kissinger and the former Democratic defence secretary Harold Brown are chairing a study group on Europe and the future.

"We are absolutely split on whether NATO should be expanded into Eastern Europe or not, so divided I cannot see any policy recommendation emerging," said Paula Dobriansky, a member of the CFR group and who served on Ronald Reagan's national security council.

But these arguments between Americans seem beside the point to foreign observers, who see a more

fundamental change taking place in the way the U.S. relates to the world.

Wolfgang Pordzik runs the Adenauer Institute in Washington, part think-tank and part embassy in the U.S. for Germany's Christian Democrats.

"The nature of U.S. leadership has changed from the military and alliance form of the cold war, to an economic leadership where the U.S. is no longer so dominant, more first among equals," he suggested.

"This means the American political class is much more concerned about the costs and benefits of involvement or intervention. This is partly a question of resources, which are constrained by budget deficits, and partly a question of alarm about U.S. casualties."

"Perhaps the Gulf war gave a misleading image of the costs of military operations. Even president Bush said the Vietnam syndrome of nervousness about casualties was finally buried. It wasn't. This became acute in Somalia, when 18 U.S. rangers were killed in a single day, and the TV screens broadcast appalling pictures of the corpse of an American helicopter pilot being dragged through Mogadishu. To be in America that week was to be aware of the whole country demanding to know what had gone wrong and what was the point of this."

Ed Luttwak, a consultant to the national security council and a genuinely original, iconoclastic thinker at Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies, believes the change is demographic, a result of smaller families, where the loss of a son means a much deeper emotional shock.

"A superpower does not only intervene when vital national interests are at stake, but has the luxury of choice to intervene and take casualties in the case of marginal interests, to indulge its preferences as well as its strategic needs," he said. "To be deterred by fear of losses is to force a superpower into the strategic profile of a petty principality."

Dr. Luttwak says the experience of the cold war has for 50 years accustomed America to the comforting delusion that a great strategic campaign can be sustained and won without war. The cold war's two serious military campaigns, in Korea and Vietnam, were deeply unpopular and controversial, and led to the toppling of two Democratic presidencies.

Professor James Chace of Bard College, another member of CFR, pointed to the role of the United Nations. "What is taking place in America is a retreat from internationalism because it is seen as costing too much in money and in lives, and promiscuously committed to causes which may not be clearly in American interests nor under American command. That is why the U.N. is the focus of so much resentment."

"This retreat from internationalism was very tightly focused, respecting U.S. intervention in marginal causes, like Somalia or Haiti, or in places like Bosnia which were seen as a European responsibility. But the suspicion about internationalism is now starting to widen ominously, to include economic matters like the attempt to rescue the Mexican peso," Prof. Chace added.

This argument is taken further by Professor David Calleo of the School of Advanced International Studies. He fears the retreat from internationalism could grow as the U.S. public comes to understand that the global economy increases the U.S. commitment overseas.

"The fact is we are extending our international obligations. We are seeking to expand NATO into Eastern Europe. Put the Haiti operation to one side, the rescue of the Mexican peso shows the degree to which we are extending our obligations in the Western hemisphere."

"In the name of nuclear non-proliferation, we are deepening our involvement in Asia. This is most visible in North Korea, where we are arranging compensation in energy supplies for dismantling nuclear reactors. But we are also compensating Kazakhstan for giving

up the nuclear capability inherited from the Soviet Union."

"And these precedents have not been lost on India and Pakistan. We also seem to be taking the lead in establishing a wider Pacific security area, based on our commitment to an Asia-Pacific free trade commun-

ity. The argument that

America's free trade strategy involves a more extensive security commitment, rather than Britain's economic dominance of the 19th century required a Pax Britannica to police it, is made most bluntly by Ben Schwarz of the Rand Corporation, the think-tank whose new focus on trade issues is indicative of the shifting grounds of the U.S. strategic debate.

"Underpinning U.S. world order strategy is the belief that America must maintain what is in essence a military protectorate in economically critical regions to ensure its vital trade and financial relations, will not be disrupted by political upheaval," Mr. Schwarz suggested.

He cites the former secretary of state Dean Rusk on Vietnam, arguing that "the U.S. is safe only to the extent its total environment is safe." He quotes the 1992 draft of the Pentagon's Defence Planning Guidance, which says the U.S. "will retain the pre-eminent responsibility for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests but those of our allies and friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations."

"This would not only overstretch U.S. resources, he argues, but would also lead to the collapse of a U.S.-run world order, because "the worldwide economic

system the U.S. has protected and fostered has itself largely determined the country's relative economic decline. Economic power has diffused from the U.S. to new centres of growth. U.S. hegemony, perforce, has been undermined."

If the U.S. public is only dimly beginning to perceive this, those subject to the Pax Americana believe there is no drift to isolationism. Quite the reverse. A senior Asian diplomat, who insisted on anonymity, suggests there is an extraordinary divergence of view about U.S. policies taking place between the Europeans and the Asians.

"All my European colleagues worry about the U.S. turning its back on them, while a lot of my Asian colleagues are concerned that the U.S. is trying to get too involved in Asia; is interfering too often and too bluntly."

"You have to have been on the receiving end of what is called U.S. trade diplomacy to realise it is not very diplomatic at all. They may say they simply want open markets and free trade, but what they mean is that we are supposed to become more like them. They want to change our distribution and retail system to suit their exporters, and change our finance system to suit their banks."

"They want us to swallow an American culture of CNN and Hollywood, insist we welcome their rude and intrusive media, while they lecture us on human rights. The cultural arrogance of a country with such problems of race and crime is breathtaking to people on our side of the Pacific. Frankly, there are times when rather more American isolation would be most welcome."

The Guardian

Letter from Manama

'Only an accountable government can tackle social problems'

IN THE circumstances, "I survived Bahrain 1994" is either a bold or a foolish slogan with which to adorn a T-shirt. Yet there the item hangs in an open-fronted shop near Bab Al Bahrain.

There in the heart of Manama, the capital of this little island state, stepped-up police patrols are supplemented by desultory groups of riot police bunched around the mosque at the junction of Street 121 and Bab Al Bahrain. Sipping tea, sitting in cars and trucks, they are fed up rather than ferocious. Their equipment looks to be from sale — a few riot shields with matching helmets and clubs (condition fair), a clutch of carbines (vintage), a CS gas gun (used), and an aged sub-machine gun (handle with care).

But Manama is quiet. There was one day of unrest when the Bab Al Bahrain police post was attacked, causing great embarrassment to the authorities but little other damage. Indeed, it is by listening rather than looking that the visitor apprehends the situation. A friend apologised profusely. Do I understand his position and why we cannot meet and why I should talk only to the ministry about "the events"?

In the same breath as forecasting lower temperatures for Wednesday, a cab driver forecasts riots on Thursday. The chat at pre-lunch drinks among European expatriates centres on a firebomb attack on a compound generator the previous night, neither the first nor the last. The nervous have been phoning their embassies for advice.

In a village, a shopkeeper locks up and leads me down a side road after a minimum of polite conversation. I am bundled into a comfortable house where two men recount the killing of a close family member by the security forces, the fatal shooting of a local youth, house raids, helicopters buzzing the village, detention without charge. My hosts are educated and middle-class. They have not signed the petition but now they want a return to constitutional rule and, like other professional and managerial Bahrainis, they sympathise with the unemployed rioters.

Middle East International.



U.S. military personnel arrive in Mogadishu as part of an advance planning team for the U.N. withdrawal from Somalia (AFP photo)

Somalia: To some Americans, a metaphor for failure

By Donald M. Rothberg
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Everything the U.S. Congress thinks is wrong with U.N. peacekeeping is contained in the memory of a single deadly clash in the streets of Mogadishu.

The memory is faulty but its impact on U.S. relations with the United Nations endures.

"Do you remember the Somalia debacle where we lost some 44 young Americans?" Rep. Toby Roth, a Wisconsin Democrat, asked the House during debate on legislation to cut back U.S. support for peacekeeping.

"When the bodies were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu?" he continued, recalling the most horrifying image from an October 1993 clash that left

18 Americans dead.

In the eyes of a majority in Congress, Somalia was a U.N. operation gone wrong. The result, nearly a year and a half later, is Republican-sponsored legislation that would reduce U.S. support for U.N. peacekeeping and restrict the president's authority to place American troops under foreign commanders.

"It's a very unfortunate situation that Somalia has been translated in our public mind as a kind of metaphor for failure," said Chester Crocker, who served as assistant secretary of state for African affairs under president Reagan.

"It's a grossly inaccurate picture of the operation." Mr. Crocker said that perception "became a foreign policy failure for Bill

Clinton. But the operation saved maybe half a million lives."

Ironically, the House debate took place as an international force including more than 7,000 Americans was gathering off the coast of Somalia to help evacuate the last 2,400 U.N. peacekeepers, troops from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

No more than a week is the Pentagon prediction of how long the latest Somalia operation should take.

But on the horizon in a troubled world are plenty of candidates for future operations.

The government of Croatia is demanding the withdrawal of U.N. peacekeepers from its territory, making that former Yugoslav republic another potential locale for a U.S.-led evacuation force.

A handful of U.S. troops — no more than 10 are contemplated — will be part of an inter-American force monitoring the ceasefire that halted a three-week border war between Ecuador and Peru.

President Clinton has said he would consider U.S. participation in peacekeeping forces to help implement peace agreement in Bosnia and between Israel and Syria.

He said he would act only with the agreement of Congress. With the bitter memory of Somalia, that might not be easy to obtain.

How much of a disaster was Somalia?

"It's important to recognise the positive aspects of our mission there," Secretary of State Warren Christ-

opher said Monday. He added that in many areas of Somalia, conditions are much better than they were earlier.

At a Pentagon briefing last month, Edward Warner III, the assistant secretary of defence responsible for peacekeeping operations, said many members of Congress "thought that the Americans who so tragically died in October 1993 were under U.N. operational control, which was not the case."

They were army special forces who were never under foreign command.

More valid, said Mr. Crocker, is the criticism of the administration and the United Nations for changing the Somalia operation from a humanitarian mission to a effort to

apprehend clan leader Mohammad Farrah Aideed.

"We had a wholly different mandate that was far beyond the reach of either the U.S. or the U.N.," he said.

At the time, there was a widespread feeling that if Somalia were ever to have a viable government the power of the warring clans had to be ended.

That led to a far broader mandate that Mr. Crocker said was a misjudgement in that "it made one of the major players in Somalia politics our enemy."

Looking to the future, Mr. Crocker said "there's a lot of test cases (of peacekeeping) coming up," citing Angola and the border between Israel and Syria among them.

World Bank backs social safety net for world's poor

GENEVA (R) — The World Bank called Tuesday for economic reform programmes to receive greater investment in healthcare and education to provide a social cushion for the world's poorest.

In a report prepared for a U.N. social summit in Copenhagen next week, the World Bank also vowed to boost lending for social services in developing countries over the next three years.

"Many countries are embarked on the arduous task of economic reform to reap the benefits, they must persevere in these efforts, making sure that appropriate safety nets are provided for the poor," said the report "advancing social development."

"Equally essential are investments in people... it is not one or the other, it is both," the report added.

One billion people live in poverty, while two billion lack electricity and one billion lack access to clean water, according to World Bank figures. Hardest-hit are the 40 countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Bank officials endorsed a draft declaration, to be debated by 130 heads of state at the summit, which calls on governments to set national

target dates and pursue strategies to eradicate extreme poverty. It also urges the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to give higher priority to such lending.

Officials, launching the report in Geneva, said the World Bank was now "the largest financier of investments in people..."

But they conceded that social services had often been given short shift in the bank's structural adjustment loans during the 1980s. These huge projects favoured investments in transport, sanitation and telecommunications.

World Bank loans for health, education, nutrition and family planning, which accounted for \$3.1 billion or 15 per cent of its total lending last year, have tripled since the 1980s.

"We have realised, maybe a little belatedly, that investment in people — the social sector — was neglected in the bank," spokesman Klas Bergman told a news conference in Geneva.

"We relied too heavily on the previous years on big projects in infrastructure. We now see that doesn't solve the problems. You need a two-track strategy — investing in people and making sure the

economic reforms happen," she added.

Lending for social services should rise steadily over the next three years, totalling \$15 billion for 1995 to 1997.

A second report, "Investing in People," said education is a major instrument to promote economic growth and reduce poverty.

It contains 17 studies on World Bank social projects across the globe, from boosting girls' enrolment in primary schools in Pakistan to an AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) prevention programme in Brazil.

Officials hoped negotiations begun by donor nations this month in Paris would result in replenishing by year-end its soft-loan affiliate, the International Development Association (IDA).

IDA-10, which has been providing \$18 billion in non-interest credits over a three-year period to more than 50 states, is due to end in June 1996. No specific target has been set for IDA-11.

Many former republics of Soviet Union are now eligible for IDA credits as they have annual per capita incomes of less than \$1,350, according to the World Bank officials.

The report notes that it is not enough just to raise investment in or aid to poorer countries. "It is equally im-

ILO calls for better market access for developing states

GENEVA, Switzerland (AFP) — Trade liberalisation means the benefits of increased market access should extend to developing countries, including the world's poorest, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said in its "World Employment 1995" report.

Hence "a fundamental objective of economic policy in developing countries should be to capture as much as possible of the potential gains from expanding trade and investment flows."

It comments that to profit from opportunities resulting from the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, developing countries must adopt a balanced "two-pronged" strategy aimed at generating more modern-sector jobs while upgrading standards of living and the vast majority of the labour force.

In view of the extent of poverty and underemployment in developing countries, "it is important that development policies should not be biased against them and that measures to reduce unemployment and poverty be given priority in government programmes."

The report notes that it is not enough just to raise investment in or aid to poorer countries. "It is equally im-

portant to raise productivity of capital and to ensure that it is efficiently allocated across sectors."

Reform of capital markets in developing countries would be likely to raise productivity rates and employment growth, and foreign direct investment can be a powerful spur to industrialisation and job creation.

But speaking of investment promotion and related reforms, including of the labour market, the ILO warns that "precipitate and ill-designed programmes are unlikely to be successful and will inflict unnecessarily high social costs in the process," weakening political support for the reform process.

It says that as liberalisation of foreign trade, capital markets and of labour markets where necessary, is a key part of increasing investment, productivity and employment in developing countries.

Africa missed out on fruits of trade liberalisation

ILO pointed out that sub-Saharan Africa has failed to cash in on global trade liberalisation because of its risky investment climate and the negative side-effects of international aid.

While trade liberalisation resulting from the Uruguay

Round of the GATT talks offers considerable scope for economic growth and reducing unemployment in developing countries, sub-Saharan Africa has missed out, the organisation said.

It described the investment picture for Africa as bleak. Direct private investment in developing countries has grown to \$200 billion per year over the past decade, but less than one per cent of it ends up in Africa.

Whereas until the late 1980s this could be attributed to domestic policies seen as hostile to foreign capital, such an argument no longer holds, the report found.

In recent years African governments have liberalised trade and exchange rates, deregulated markets and privatised state-owned companies.

But investment remains scarce because policy changes are not fully credible, with governments agreeing to reforms in exchange for aid rather than acting spontaneously.

In addition, Africa has failed to diversify its exports away from agriculture, which is vulnerable to climate and fluctuations on international commodities markets, while the region's civic infrastructure, including the legal and accounting systems, is weak.

Meanwhile, aid now

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 1995

accounts for 9.3 per cent of the region's gross domestic product and the proportion is growing. "The only international economic dimension in which Africa has become non-marginal is aid."

"A transfer ostensibly intended to help the entire society has the effect of plunging an important component of it into poverty," the report said.

It called for foreign aid to be redesigned so as to assist rather than implicitly tax the export sector."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 2, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have creative ideas that need proper arranging before putting them in operation. Personal goals can be easily attained today as the planets are with you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make necessary changes in your business this morning that will give you added comfort. Be sure your business affairs are running smoothly to avoid any complications.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can benefit greatly by concerted action in your line of endeavour at this time. Avoid unnecessary expenditure of money in the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You know how best to add to present abundance so stop wasting valuable time and get everything arranged this morning. Express happiness with a loved one and you will find that he or she is pleased.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This morning is a good time to go after that goal, since you don't want to wait. Listen to complaints of family members instead of airing your own views at the next meeting.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Contact allies who can give you the support you need in the AM. The important project you have in mind needs to move forwards now. Show that you are sincere in your appreciation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Know what your personal aims are and go after them in a positive manner this morning. Sidestep one who is trying to make trouble for you in the eyes of others.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be sure not to invest more money than you can afford today or you will regret it later. Show others that you have wisdom beyond your years.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your intuitive faculties are working well at this time so make good use of them today. You can handle business matters wisely now and this evening is good for romantic entertainment.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Use better and more modern methods in your business dealings today and get better results. Don't neglect important bills which need to be paid now. Others are tired of waiting.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make as many allies as is wise at this time. Much care in motion should be exercised this afternoon and evening to avoid a possible accident.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Make any changes necessary this AM to improve the quality of your work and then reap the benefits. Show that you can get any project.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY MARCH 4, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Follow the right precepts and principals you wish to operate under in the days ahead and you will have more success and happiness in any endeavour.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Morning is fine for improving the situation at home. Later, put your finest talents to work. Think constructively on any project you're involved in and others will catch your enthusiasm.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You need to employ more effort now to gain your most cherished goals. Show increased devotion to family members this evening and they will appreciate it.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Know your true position in financial affairs with associate and take steps to improve it. Be logical in your thinking on any matter.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Morning is best for going after personal aims. Show more consideration for closest ties and ease the tension at home which could develop.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Figure out what you desire in the future and then do your best this morning to attain these aims. Use right methods to solve a problem which has developed.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're able to be of assistance to one you are fond of. Steer clear of a group meeting today which could have problems connected with it that you don't care to be involved in.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are able to gain success from higher-ups now and are able to advance in your career. Don't overlook an important business matter which is coming up later and will require your full attention.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A new contact can be helpful to you in gaining the support of an influential person this AM. Come to a better understanding with your mate and try to find out what they are really concerned about.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Make sure business matters are handled well this morning before you engage in any social activity. Look for quiet pleasures while at home with your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a good morning to talk over your ideas with associates and gain their cooperation. Positive thinking could help you gain your aims and desires.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Work is a pleasure in the morning. Later you will have time to spend with associates in constructive pursuits. Be more optimistic.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MARCH 5, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You will feel like you want to establish a new system this morning so your regular tasks are easier to perform. Be more optimistic about the future in any situation that comes about.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) State your aims to a good friend and gain their support in a new activity you have in mind. Express your happiness with congenial companions and make sure that they know where you stand.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Go to an influential person for the help you need to carry through with your plans in the AM. See that your personal life is organised and that no one is left to wonder what you're doing.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Put in motion a project that was impossible to do in the past. Get started early today and make sure that everyone connected is contacted. Take treatments to improve your appearance this PM.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Concentrate on how to improve your environment this morning. Discuss practical matters with friends and get their advice on how to proceed ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Make sure you improve home conditions this morning. Not a good day to ask an influential person for a favour. Engage in a favourite hobby for peace of mind.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Study your surroundings and make plans for improvement. Make new contacts that you be helpful in your current enterprise.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Ideal day to enjoy yourself with recreation in the company of congenial friends and associates. A talent you have can be expressed at this time and will be well-received by all concerned.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) It may be difficult to gain your aims in the morning, but things will improve later in the day. Spend your money wisely and you can have some left in reserve.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take time to consult influential persons who can help you in your career. Be more willing to cooperate with others in any situation and make sure you get to bed early this evening.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study your monetary affairs well and know how best to improve them this morning. Contact a financial expert and get excellent advice.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A good day to further personal relationships and make big headway. Discuss personal plans with trusted friends and you will get much accomplished.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY MARCH 3, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to find new interests which give you added abundance this morning. Be sure to maintain a cheerful manner for all those around you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Carry through with ideas that will bring you more harmony and more ideal conditions in your home this PM. Your ability to organise is in effect now and should produce bountiful results.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Contact one who can help you get ahead in your line of endeavour this morning. Adopt a more logical outdoor in life and be practical in your ideas.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Money should be uppermost in your mind today. Use practical sense in all your business dealings and you will have great success in them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get busy doing what you want most to do and make real headway towards personal and business success this morning. Use cars in motion, especially on the highway.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Make long range plans that you're truly devoted to your chosen mate and spend as much time as you can with them this evening.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Good day to be with fascinating friends for the recreation you mutually find pleasurable. Take steps to improve your health for the time ahead.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Make constructive plans that could give you greater success in business. Do nothing that could harm your good name today in any form, especially to a big who could help you advance.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Take advantage of an opportunity today to advance in your career and become more prosperous. Be active and cheerful in any activity in which you are asked to participate.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Use your ingenuity to expand in business affairs and get good results now. Strive for more harmony with family members this evening and you'll find that you'll be much happier.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A good time to make concrete plans this morning that could bring added income in the future. Take no chance with your reputation in the eyes of others.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study your environment and make plans to improve it today. Come to a better accord with associates. Show that you have poise and confidence this evening.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

THE Daily Crossword

By Janet R. Bender

ACROSS

1 Used haggly (4)

5 Aquatic (4)

10 Canoe (4)

Business
Daily
BeatA review
of economic news
from the Arabic pressBarings
does not
hold equity
in APC'

Arab Potash Company (APC) has dismissed market rumours that the collapsed Barings bank held a stake in the company's capital. APC explained that Barings acted only as a broker to three foreign companies in buying APC shares. APC named the companies and their holdings as follows: Global Privatisation Fund (206,333 shares/dinars), International Privatisation Fund (14,900 shares/dinars) and Worldwide Privatisation Fund (11,100 shares/dinars) (Al Aswaq).

Merchants estimate the minimum cost to dress a child for the feast at JD 20 and, as such, the head of a family with four, for example, four children would need JD 80 to buy new clothes. The merchants say that due to limited income and large size families' parents can only provide the bare minimum of the requirements for the feast.

Merchants also say recession is unprecedented and it affects especially the clothing sector. They point to the return of many expatriates after the Gulf war and the lack of purchasing power those expatriates have now as compared to the past when their arrivals before the feast would create a commercial boom. Moreover, the merchants say, the flow of remittances is no longer as large as in the "good old days," thereby adding to the weak activity. Despite the cool weather, traders are displaying summer clothes because many people are not capable to buy clothes for the Adha feast which comes in early summer and are bound to buy summer clothes to serve both feasts.

One of the traders' complaints was against the "suitcase merchants," who, they charged, bring cheap clothes from neighbouring countries and sell them at lower prices and, even, on installments (Al Aswaq).

NutriDar company has finalised its registration procedures and the general assembly elected Dr. Sami Farah Al Hababi as chairman of the board of directors. Mohammad Sadeq Al Fityani was elected vice-chairman. Nabil Hassan Al Nabulsi, Abdul Rahman Jardaneh, Azmi Mohammad Latouf, Mohammad Murtada Yaish, Mohammad Tahsin Salim Al Sabbagh, Walid Edgar Finan and Mohammad Rashed Saleh were elected members. According to Mr. Fityani, the company's designs are ready and the tender to build the project's structure is expected to be announced in August. The building may be completed in 18 months and after the installation of machinery and equipment production is likely to start at the beginning of 1997.

Mr. Fityani also said that a technical agreement has been initialled with a German firm.

Land and buildings are expected to cost JD 1.13 million while equipment and other machinery are projected at JD 1.62 million.

The feasibility study envisages initial production at 500 tonnes a year that would increase to 4,000 tonnes after five years. Exports, starting from the second year of operations, are projected at 75 per cent of the output. Local sales are seen at JD 1.53 million in the first year, rising to JD 12.24 million in the fifth year. As such, JD 444,700 profit could be earned in 1997 and JD 2.2 million in the year 2002. The study showed that NutriDar could recover its JD 4 million capital within four years. Dar Al Dawa Development and Investment Company, Dar Al Dawa for Veterinary and Agricultural Industries, the Jordan Investments and Finance Bank, the Arab Financial Investment and Nizar Jardaneh own 51.8 per cent, or JD 2.08 million, of NutriDar capital (Al Aswaq).

Rogue trader vanishes
despite Asia-wide search

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — An Asia-wide search for Barings trade Nick Leeson has found little more than rumours and officials conceded Wednesday the man who broke Britain's oldest merchant bank has vanished "into thin air."

A Malaysian police source said they believe Mr. Leeson slipped out of Malaysia after checking out of the Kuala Lumpur Hotel Friday. "He's disappeared into thin air," the police source told Reuters in Malaysia's capital of Kuala Lumpur.

"Leeson is probably out of Malaysia by now but we are still looking for him as requested by Singapore police," the sources said.

Singapore's commercial affairs division wants to question the Barings futures general manager for Singapore, with a view to determine whether he should be charged with fraud and sabotage, the Singapore Straits Times said Wednesday.

Mr. Leeson is the missing link in the loss of an estimated \$1 billion for the merchant banking giant in risky derivatives trading on Japanese stock markets.

He was last seen checking out of the Kuala Lumpur Regent Friday after arriving the night before. Mr. Leeson arrived in Malaysia at least 24 hours before the magnitude of the losses became widely publicised.

South East Asian police forces were checking a myriad of Mr. Leeson sightings in various hotels and

watering holes between Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok as the search entered its fourth day.

New details about the life of the 28-year-old futures trader, described by some of his colleagues as a quiet, likeable fellow who enjoyed playing soccer, and by others as an arrogant bon vivant who enjoyed life in the fast lane.

The Singapore Business Times reported Wednesday that he was fined for indecent exposure last year.

Mr. Leeson "dropped his pants in front of a group of women" at a Singapore discotheque about five months ago, the newspaper said. "The women promptly phoned the police and Leeson subsequently found himself before a magistrate and was fined \$200 (\$140) for indecent exposure."

The British Broadcasting Corporation reported that Mr. Leeson, on holiday a week before he disappeared, boasted to his golfing partners that he had already made enough money at Barings to retire in a year.

Police, and his colleagues in the high-flying financial world, speculated that Mr. Leeson may have tried to cross the country's northern border into Thailand. It was not clear whether Mr. Leeson's wife, 23-year-old Lise Sims, was with him.

Financial Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Markets Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets		Mon. 20/12/94	Tuesday 21/12/94
Current		20/12/94	21/12/94
Sterling Pound	1.5835	1.5799*	
Deutsche Mark	1.4622	1.4514	
Swiss Franc	1.2376	1.2359**	
French Franc	51.1405	51.1360**	
Japanese Yen	98.74	98.51	
U.S. Dollar	1.4111	1.4081	
** European Opening & 200 am. GMT			
EuroCurrency Interest Rates			Dates: 1/3/1995
Current	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.81	5.93	6.12
Sterling Pound	6.18	6.43	6.81
Deutsche Mark	4.75	4.81	5.00
Swiss Franc	3.37	3.62	3.81
French Franc	6.12	6.25	6.50
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.06	2.12
European Currency Unit	6.11	6.27	6.56
Interest bid rates for demand certificates U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.			7.00

Precious Metals		
Metal	USD/Oz.	JD/Gm*
Gold	376.70	7.50

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Schedule

Dates: 1/3/1995

Currency		Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar		0.6930	0.6950
Sterling Pound	1.0967	1.1022	
Deutsche Mark	0.4750	0.4774	
Swiss Franc	0.5610	0.5634	
French Franc	0.1349	0.1356	
Japanese Yen	0.7171	0.7207	
Dutch Guilder	0.4236	0.4257	
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000	
Italian Lira*	0.0417	0.0419	
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000	

* Per 100

Other Currencies

Dates: 1/3/1995

Currency		Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8250	1.8410	
Lebanese Lira*	0.041875	0.042280	
Saudi Riyal	0.1865	0.1860	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3100	2.3500	
Qatari Riyal	0.1865	0.1918	
Egyptian Pound	0.1850	0.2085	
Omani Riyal	1.7910	1.8100	
UAE Dirham	0.1867	0.1900	
Greek Drachma*	0.2725	0.3150	
Cypriot Pound	1.4350	1.5125	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3942/52
1.4630/40	
1.6398/08	
1.2390/00	
30.13/17	
5.1395/45	
1643.86/8	
96.70/80	
7.3375/75	
6.4680/30	
5.8210/69	
One sterling	\$1.5802/12
One ounce of gold	\$376.20/376.70

Barings collapse unlikely to spur repatriation of Arab Gulf funds

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The thick tropical border jungle is faced with smuggler's routes and old communist rebel tunnels.

Of the many unconfirmed reports on Mr. Leeson's whereabouts, one said he had surfaced on Thailand's resort island of Phuket.

Another said he was detained in Thailand early on Wednesday morning but that police said they have no record of him, Malaysian officials said Wednesday.

Indonesia's armed forces commander General Feisal Tanjung said the country is ready to help track Mr. Leeson if he enters the archipelago.

"Indonesia is ready to help find this person on the run if he enters Indonesia but at this stage we have no news," Tanjung told reporters before a cabinet meeting in Jakarta.

ability make them feel safe."

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the biggest oil producers in the world, account for a large part of total overseas Arab assets, estimated independently at between \$600 billion and \$800 billion.

Official figures showed inter-Arab investment stood at only \$12.2 billion at the end of 1993 despite recurrent calls for bringing back capital from abroad to finance development in the region.

According to the bankers, Arab assets abroad include between \$200 billion and \$300 billion in stocks and equities, \$260 billion in bank deposits and the rest in real estate and other sectors.

Official figures showed GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — own

nearly \$400 billion in investment in the United States alone.

According to the UAE Sharjah chamber of commerce and industry, Arabs lost nearly \$12 billion in those investments in 1994 due to a decline in stocks and the U.S. dollar. The biggest Arab loss is believed to have occurred during the world stock market crash in 1987, when GCC investors were said to have suffered from a decline of more than \$25 billion in their assets.

"A loss of one billion dollars by Barings bank does not mean you can no longer make profits," a UAE banker said. "The loss was caused mainly by one person and it was due to highly speculative trading."

Official figures showed Arab assets abroad were invested in relatively secure sectors such as banks, real estate, treasury bills and government bonds.

They are also kept away from speculation as regional governments and individuals opt for fixed income in the long run.

Economists said shares in the Gulf were now yielding more than in external markets but they noted regional exchanges were relatively small as governments have a high ownership and dealing is restricted to nationals.

Marion Merrell, Hoechst confirm acquisition talks

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (AP) — The German chemical and drug company Hoechst A.G. is negotiating to buy Marion Merrell Dow Inc. in what could be one of the largest acquisitions in the pharmaceutical industry, the companies confirmed Tuesday.

The proposed deal, worth about \$7 billion, would create a strong position for Hoechst in the U.S. drug market.

Fred Lyons, Marion chairman and chief executive officer, said Tuesday.

"This is good news," Mr. Lyons said at news conference. "We're very pleased that it has progressed this well."

The plan calls for Hoechst, the world's fourth-largest pharmaceutical company, to acquire the outstanding shares of Marion Merrell Dow at a cost of \$25.75 per share. The deal would boost Hoechst's position in the drug industry

Official Arab figures showed key regional institutions have a tendency to diversify their investments abroad to offset any loss in one sector.

One of those institutions is the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund, which has reported steady profits from its overseas investment over the past decade.

Another institution is the UAE central bank, which said last year it had switched from bank deposits to treasury bills and government bonds to avert losses from a decline in interest rates and economic recession in the West.

From around \$3.3 billion at the end of 1992, its deposits were slashed to \$1.6 billion at the end of 1993. Most of the money removed from banks were invested in bills and bonds, which surged by 103 per cent to around \$4.19 billion from \$2.07 billion.

A recent opinion poll by the Arab League's main investment body, the Arab Corporation for Investment and Development (ACIG), found internal political instability was the main factor for scaring away Arab investors.

"There are several obstacles for investment in the Arab World," it said. "But political instability and

Coach Ma Junren planning comeback

BEIJING (R) — Unbowed by throat surgery, appendicitis and a serious car accident, the ousted trainer of China's world-beating 'Ma Junren army' running team is planning a come-back, the *Wanbao* newspaper said Wednesday.

"Ma Junren's eyebrow is arched and his nose is askew as he is still in good spirits," quoted a Liaoning sports official as saying.

The controversial coach and a return to top-level athletics with a new crop of young middle and long distance runners along with a loyal Qu Yundia, the only member of his 'army' to stick with him after the team collapsed last year, the newspaper said.

Qu is the world 1,500 metres world record holder. China's record breaking men's distance running

team splintered amid allegation that he put too much pressure on his athletes and pocketed their winnings.

Ma, said by one newspaper last month to be despondent and regretful, was unbowed by surgery and a car crashed after his father's death, the newspaper said.

His new team will be in direct competition with the rest of his former 'army' — now called the Liaoning Women's Distance Running Team — and its assistant trainer Wang Junxia, who smashed the women's 10,000 and 3,000 metres records in one extraordinary week in August 1993.

"Two members of the squad are even better than Wang Junxia was in the beginning," the newspaper quoted the sports official as saying.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Paris-Beijing Rally on course

PARIS (AFP) — Former Paris-Dakar rally winner and organiser René Metge has put together what he calls the voyage of a lifetime with a 10,000km Rally from Paris to Beijing via Moscow. "Apart from the parade through Moscow's Red Square it's completely different from the 1992 rally," he said Wednesday. A Russian international trading company revived an event interrupted by conflicts in different parts of the former Soviet republic. Russian authorities, willing to include the event in celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War, gave the go-ahead to this year's rally which starts a wide berth of the war in Chechnya. The rally will start on Aug 6 and after driving to Kiel in Germany the competitors will be ferried through the Baltic to St. Petersburg. The plains of Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China will test drivers before they reach Beijing on Aug. 26.

Jailed Turkish soccer star freed

ANKARA (AP) — A court in Istanbul free Turkish soccer Tanju Colak after he helped the court with investigations which led to the arrest of a car smuggling gang. Colak, the leading scorer in European soccer in the 1987-88 season, had served seven months of a 22-month prison sentence for knowingly buying a smuggled luxury car. He was also fined 772 million lire (\$24,000). Colak told Star TV that he wanted to return to professional soccer as soon as possible. He reportedly already had several offers from Turkish clubs.

Sumo champion to get Japanese citizenship

TOKYO (AFP) — Hawaiian sumo wrestler Akebono, the first-ever foreign "Yokozuna," or grand champion, said Tuesday he would apply for Japanese citizenship by December. "I will be relieved if I can do it as soon as possible," said the 25-year-old American, whose real name is Chad Rowan. "As long as I want to continue sumo, I must become a Japanese." A tradition-bound sumo rule holds that only a Japanese can obtain the status of a sumo elder, which allows him to become a stablemaster after retirement. Akebono started his sumo career six years ago and has remained been ranked at the top for more than two years. Currently, he shares the top position with his rival, Japanese sumo star Takanohana.

Coberger to quit skiing

VIENNA (R) — New Zealander Annelise Coberger, silver medalist in the 1992 Winter Olympics, will retire from Alpine skiing after this season, she said Wednesday. Coberger, 22, the first competitor from the southern hemisphere to win a winter Olympic medal, said she had decided to pursue other interests. "After 12 years without a summer, without a Christmas at home, I have decided it is time to move on to other things," she said in a statement. "I have never had the opportunity to have the normal life of a young person being so far away from my home in New Zealand."

France not asked to pay for sea rescue

CANBERRA (AFP) — France has not been asked to help pay the bill for Australia's rescue of solo yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier, French Minister for Youth and Sport Michelle Alliot-Marie said here Tuesday. Australia spent an estimated 745,000 Australian dollars (\$558,000) rescuing BOC round the world entrant Autissier on January 1 from her dismasted yacht in the Southern Ocean. She was rescued from heavy seas, by a naval helicopter after a dramatic search and rescue mission which involved aircraft and a frigate. "I think there's a certain tradition in the area of sea rescue and certainly there has never been any question of payment requested for this year," Alliot-Marie told reporters.

Young fan causes police panic

UCKLAND (AFP) — When a 12-year-old girl disappeared from her provincial home last week with a backpack filled with 3,000 NZ dollars (\$1,900), police feared for her safety. But when they finally caught up with her alone, the 12-year-old was preparing to fly off to Australia after having spent the weekend watching cricket, the New Zealand Herald reported Tuesday. The girl, who had already bought her plane ticket for Australia, told the herald she had spent Sunday at a one-day cricket match between Australia and New Zealand. "I'm not missing," the girl told the Herald. "I just left home and I'm not going back. And I don't want anyone to know where I am." She is to be returned with her parents Tuesday.

Apin denies he is quitting Bayern

UNICH (R) — Bayern Munich's French international Jean-Pierre Papin, whose season has been plagued by injury, quashed rumours on Wednesday that he wanted to leave the German club this year. "I don't want to go. I want to honour my contract until 1996... if Bayern takes it one-year option, even until 1997," Papin, 31, said. "I have a lot of aims in Munich. Next year I will have more and then Bayern will see the real champion Papin." Papin has failed to make an impact at the reigning German champions since he came to Munich from AC Milan at the start of the season.

CLA has top spot in college poll

LOS ANGELES (AP) — UCLA received 61 first-place votes to take over the No. 1 ranking in this week's Associated Press college basketball poll. The Bruins (21-2) are the fifth team in five weeks and the sixth team this season to hold the top ranking. They received 1,642 points in the national media panel to easily beat runner-up North Carolina (21-3), which collected three No. 1 votes (1,546 points).

O'Neal scores 41 to lead Magic over Knicks

ORLANDO (Agencies) — Shaquille O'Neal had 41 points and Dennis Scott scored 26 as the Orlando Magic strengthened their hold on the top spot in the Atlantic Division with a 118-106 victory over the New York Knicks on Tuesday.

O'Neal scored 14 of his points in the first quarter, when Orlando erupted for 40 points, the most by a New York opponent in any quarter this season.

Patrick Ewing had 32 points and 15 rebounds, John Starks had scored 19, making five three-pointers for the Knicks, who have lost six of their last seven games in Orlando.

"You can't get to happy about it (the victory) because they're still the team to beat and they're full of veterans."

The Knicks committed 18 turnovers, while Orlando turned the ball over just nine times.

In Milwaukee, Glen Rice scored 24 points and the Miami Heat allowed just 32 second-half points on the way to a 95-85 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Billy Owens added 17 points and 16 rebounds, and Keith Askins had 16 points and 14 rebounds off the bench for Miami.

"I just had confidence in my shot tonight," Askins said. "The coach has confidence in me as well as the team. When they have that confidence, you can come in and take shots like that."

In Washington, Clarence Weatherspoon scored 30 points and Dana Barros had eight of his 19 in the fourth

RESULTS

Philadelphia	106	Washington	102
Orlando	118	New York	106
Dallas	102	Houston	101
Miami	95	Milwaukee	85
San Antonio	100	Cleveland	83
Denver	114	Minnesota	93
LA Clippers	110	Phoenix	99

quarter as the Philadelphia 76ers snapped a four-game losing streak with a 106-102 victory over the Washington Bullets.

Sharone Wright had 17 points for Philadelphia, which won for only the fourth time in its last 18 games.

Juwon Howard scored 20 points, Scott Skiles had 19 and Chris Webber 17 for Washington, which lost for the 13th time in 15 games.

In Denver, Dikembe Mutombo scored a season-high 26 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, lifting the Denver Nuggets to their seventh straight home victory, a 114-101 triumph over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Denver never trailed, scoring the first 12 points of the game.

Jalen Rose rose 18 points and seven assists, and Reggie Williams added 15 points for the Nuggets.

Isaiah Rider scored 20 points for Minnesota.

In San Antonio, Sean Elliott scored five points in a 12-3 burst that closed the first half and lifted the San Antonio Spurs to their ninth straight home victory, a 100-83 triumph over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

David Robinson scored 18 points and Chuck Person added 17 for the Spurs, who won six straight games.

In Dallas, Popeye Jones made a three-point play with 23 seconds left to rally the Dallas Mavericks to a 102-101 victory over the Houston Rockets.

Jones followed a miss by Jamal Mashburn, tipping in the shot as he was fouled by the Rockets forward Chuck Brown. Jones made the free throw to give Dallas a 102-

Maxwell reinstated by NBA

Houston Rockets guard Vernon Maxwell was reinstated by the National Basketball Association after serving a 10-game suspension for going into the stands and striking a fan.

Maxwell has played only two games this season because of various injuries. He resumed light training on Monday, but it was not clear when he would return to the line-up.

The reinstatement took effect after Monday night's home game against Cleveland, and Maxwell will be eligible to play Tuesday night at Dallas.

"We are satisfied that Vernon appreciates that his actions were totally unacceptable for a professional athlete, regardless of the provocation," NBA deputy commission Russ Granik said.

Maxwell was suspended without pay and fined \$20,000 for the incident during the third quarter of the Rockets' Feb. 6 game at Portland. Oregon won by the Trail Blazers 120-82.

Sonics' coach fined \$10,000

The National Basketball Association on Tuesday fined Seattle SuperSonics coach George Karl \$10,000 for his remarks about referees following Monday night's 116-114 loss to the Charlotte Hornets.

NBA vice president of operations Rod Thorn levied the fine against Karl, who was particularly upset at the referees for calling a technical foul on Seattle's Shawn Kemp for taunting after a dunk with two minutes left to play.

"It's a shame when officiating takes over a game," Karl said after the loss. (Referee) Ted Bernhardt ought to be shot."

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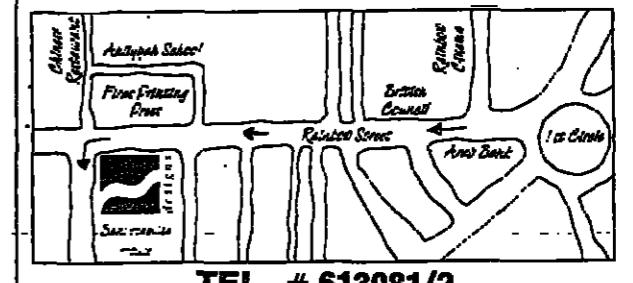
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Jazireh's Bethlehem visit cancelled

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The first Jordanian sports team that was to visit the occupied territories since 1967 Wednesday learned that their visas were denied by the Israeli authorities and that they would not be going on their history-making trip after all.

Al Jazireh's women's basketball team was to leave for Bethlehem Thursday at an invitation from the Catholic Action Club where they were to play five matches against Palestinian teams: Orthodox Bier Jala, Sariyet Ramallah, the University of Bethlehem as well as two matches against their hosts.

"We only learned this afternoon that our visas were denied, so the players are surely disappointed since everything was arranged and we were quite enthusiastic about the idea," Al Jazireh's head coach Fadi Al Sabbah Wednesday told the Jordan Times.

The Bethlehem matches

would have been a good chance for Al Jazireh to test their preparedness before they leave for Cyprus, March 22-29, where they will be hosted by the Kefalovryos Club who played in Al Jazireh's international tournament in July 1994.

"We will now focus on our preparations for the Cyprus visit. That will hopefully make up for the players' disappointment," Mr. Sabbah added.

Al Jazireh will be facing stiff competition in Cyprus

where they will be playing alongside the Kalybos Club of Greece, Lebanese champions Homenmen, Syria's runners up Al Jala, the Catholic Action Club as well as their hosts, Jordan's Al Orthodoxi have declined the invitation.

Al Jazireh, who won the Kingdom's 1993 champion after joining the women's basketball scene in 1991, are putting the finishing touches before they clash

with reigning champions Al Orthodoxi in the 1995 championship scheduled for mid-April.

Al Jazireh now have 10 players on the initial line-up of the recently-regrouped national team. They include Rana Husseini, Jumana Saifi, Suhair Mackus, Tamara Al Khadra, Tala Al Mauge, Rania Dajani, Hala Muheisen and a good group of younger, ambitious players.

Yang defended China saying it ranked only second in Asia and 10th in the world in 1993 in terms of numbers of athletes caught using banned substances.

China will increase the frequency of out-of-competition tests, he said. It conducted 526 such tests in 1994, up from 315 in 1993, 185 in 1992 and 122 in 1991.

The swimming scandal came as a shock to the sport and an embarrassment to China. Chinese sports officials have vigorously denied allegations of systematic doping.

They also face fines of up to five times their winnings, and their coaches, doctors and managers face similar punishment.

China is fighting an uphill battle against doping.

In 1994, 31 athletes, including several world stars, tested positive, up from 24 in 1993, said Yang Tianle, director of the national research institute of sports medicine.

Of the 31, a total of 11

China to send athletes who use drugs to jail

BEIJING (R) — China's top sports authorities said some Chinese athletes are still using banned stimulants and unveiled tough anti-doping punishments on Wednesday that could send athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs to jail.

The regulations call for athletes caught using illegal performance-enhancing drugs to be imprisoned and to have their prize winnings seized. They will also be banned from competition and stripped of their titles. He gave no details of the jail terms.

They also face fines of up to five times their winnings, and their coaches, doctors and managers face similar punishment.

China is fighting an uphill battle against doping.

In 1994, 31 athletes, including several world stars, tested positive, up from 24 in 1993, said Yang Tianle, director of the national research institute of sports medicine.

Of the 31, a total of 11

tested positive at last October's Asian Games in Hiroshima. They included world swimming champions Li Bin and Yang Aihua and five other swimmers, all of whom have been banned from competition for two years.

Yang defended China saying it ranked only second in Asia and 10th in the world in 1993 in terms of numbers of athletes caught using banned substances.

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battle against doping.

In 1994,

NEWS IN BRIEF

Progress in Iraqi-Turkish pipeline talks

BAGHDAD (R) — Ongoing talks on the repair of Iraq's corroding crude oil pipeline through Turkey have made some progress, diplomats said on Wednesday. "The talks on the pipeline are continuing and there is progress," one diplomat in Baghdad said without elaborating. About 27 million barrels of crude oil are trapped in the pipeline closed shortly after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Turkey needs to flush and refill the rusting pipeline. According to U.N. resolutions revenues from the oil pumped should be spent on the purchase of food and medical supplies. The diplomat said the main problem was the distribution of food in northern Iraq, held by rebel Kurds. "Iraq still rejects international supervision (there)," he said.

800 prisoners held incommunicado in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian authorities have been holding more than 800 prisoners incommunicado for over 14 months, forbidding visits by family and lawyers, the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) said Wednesday. Detainees in the high-security block of Torah prison, nicknamed the Scorpion, "have not been able to contact their families or their lawyers" since December 20, 1993, an EOHR report said. The continuing ban contradicts an administrative court ruling issued in April 1992 which abolished the prohibition of visits, the rights group said. The court overruled arguments by the Interior Ministry that the measure was necessary to prevent contacts between "terrorist elements inside the prison and their collaborators outside," it added. The EOHR believed that the ban was "an attempt by officials of the ministry of the interior to obscure the deteriorating living conditions and to prevent prisoners from complaining about torture and ill-treatment they have been subjected to."

Israel's spy master played trumpet

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The outgoing head of Israel's feared internal intelligence agency, the Shin Beth, relaxed by playing trumpet in several leading orchestras. The revelation came Wednesday with the lifting of censorship on the identity of the man known only by the initial "Y" since he took charge of the agency in 1988. Yaakov Peri, 51, found time to use his classical music background without blowing his cover. He appeared notably in the Israel radio orchestra. Mr. Peri, born in Tel Aviv, joined the Shin Beth in 1966 and climbed the ranks to run occupied East Jerusalem and West Bank for six years. He took over the top job amid a major scandal after it was disclosed in the press that four years earlier the Shin Beth had executed two Palestinians caught alive after hijacking a bus. Mr. Peri was appointed to clean up the agency and also tackle the intifada which had erupted in December 1987. Israel Radio said that his agents interrogated 26,000 Palestinians in the last seven years, dismantled 3,788 cells and prevented 50 per cent of attempted attacks. At the same time, the Shin Beth became synonymous with torture for the Palestinians. Human rights groups repeatedly charged the ill-treatment is systematic and listed in detail some of the gruesome practices.

84-year-old man dies of stroke after stabbing wife

BEIRUT (AP) — An 84-year-old man died of heart failure Wednesday after stabbing his wife several times with a kitchen knife in a domestic dispute, police said. Tagh Shikrallah Munzir, 63, was hospitalised with critical stab wounds in her neck, chest and abdomen, a police statement said. Shaker Nematollah Munzir suffered the cardiac arrest when police arrived at his home to take him away for interrogation. Neighbours in Munzir's mountain village of Ain Al Rihaneh in the Christian heartland northeast of Beirut told police the couple had been constantly arguing.

Kuwaiti court commutes sentences of rape convict

KUWAIT (AP) — The appeals court has commuted to life in prison a death sentence handed down by a lower tribunal against a stateless Arab convicted of abducting and raping a nine-year-old girl in a mosque. A higher court official speaking Wednesday on condition of anonymity, said the ruling was passed Tuesday. He refused to give details of the session or say on what grounds the sentence was reduced. The criminal court sentenced Abdul Razzaq Ayed, 21, to death on Nov. 12. According to court documents, Ayed lured the girl last July from a shopping centre in the Al Jabra area to a mosque where he raped her "with utter disregard for all religious and moral values." The name of the victim was not released. Ayed can still take his case to the cassation court, the emirate's highest judicial authority. In August, a Kuwaiti man was hanged for abducting and raping a 10-year-old Egyptian girl.

Israel ready for mine-sweeping in Asia, Africa

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel is ready to take part in mine-clearance operations in Cambodia, Angola and Mozambique and other developing countries, and foreign ministry said Wednesday. Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin has agreed in principle to requests from several countries and the United Nations for the Israeli army and military industry to take part, a spokesman said. The framework of the mine-sweeping operations is yet to be organised, the spokesman added.

Israel, Madagascar want closer cooperation

ANTANANARIVO (AFP) — A Israeli delegation left Madagascar Tuesday following a 10-day visit aimed at setting up closer ties between the two countries and reestablishing diplomatic relations. The Israeli delegation was the first to visit the southeast African country since the two broke relations in 1973. Sources said another expert-level Israeli delegation will visit Madagascar soon to look into such issues as cotton production, oil-exploration, defense and health.

Iran slams Iraq's stand on PoWs

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Wednesday blasted Iraq's "lack of sincerity" concerning the fate of prisoners of the 1980-1988 war between the two countries, state radio said. The Iraqi government said last week that the discovery of the bodies of 3,000 Iranians killed in the war supports its claim that no Iranian Prisoners of War (PoWs) are still held in Iraq. But Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi rejected the explanation, saying "the remark is a new proof of Iraq's lack of sincerity and its suspicious attitude." Iraq is "facing a crisis of confidence in its domestic and foreign relations," he said, quoted by Iranian radio. Tehran held a mass funeral last week for 3,000 soldiers whose bodies were found on the former battlefields of southwestern Iran. Iran says more than 30,000 soldiers and civilians are still missing from the war and claims that thousands are still alive and held prisoner by Iraq. Baghdad denies detaining any prisoners and accuses Iran of raising the issue to avoid disclosing how many casualties it suffered during the war. Iraq also says Iran is still detaining thousands of Iraqi prisoners.

Turkish premier ends Japan trip

TOKYO (AFP) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller left Tokyo for home Wednesday at the end of a four-day visit to promote business between the two countries. Ms. Ciller met Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko as well as Prime Minister Tomiochi Murayama and other top government officials. In talks with Mr. Murayama on Monday, the two agreed to boost economic ties and boost Japanese investment in the Turkish market. Mr. Murayama offered \$500 million to help cover insurance for trade between Turkey and other nations.

Soccer trouble

A Chelsea supporter is arrested after being caught while trying to climb the fence of Bruges Olympia Stadium on Tuesday during the European Cup Winners Cup tie (AFP photo)



Zhirinovski flies out after visit to Baghdad

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Vladimir Zhirinovski, leader of a Russian ultra-nationalist party and maverick politician, flew out early Wednesday after a three-day visit to Iraq where he met with President Saddam Hussein and called on Baghdad to join an anti-West coalition. diplomatic sources said.

Mr. Zhirinovski, who heads the Liberal Democratic Party — a strong force in the State Duma, the Lower House of the Russian parliament — also signed a draft agreement on Russian-Iraqi cooperation. Details of the accord were not available, but it was believed to be an outline for increased trade and industrial cooperation between the sides.

Another protocol signed by the two sides involve close cooperation between Iraq's National Assembly and Baath Party and the Russian parliament. Mr. Zhirinovski was accompanied by several members of the Russian legislature and businessmen.

It was not immediately known whether Mr. Zhirinovski, a controversial and outspoken figure who often challenges Western norms of protocol, had secured any arrangement under which Iraq would give priority to repaying its debts to Russia after international sanctions on Baghdad are eased/lifted.

At the outset of the visit, Mr. Zhirinovski said one of the main objectives of his visit to Iraq was to secure such a commitment. According to the Russian politician, Baghdad owes \$9 billion to Moscow, most of it in arms purchases during the 80s.

Mr. Zhirinovski has often called for an immediate end to the sanctions against Iraq, saying the crippling trade

French diplomat urges

Iraq to respect U.N. terms

BAGHDAD (R) — Jean-François Nodinot, the first French diplomat accredited to Baghdad after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, said on Wednesday Paris wanted Iraq to comply with all U.N. Gulf war resolutions.

But he said the U.N. Security Council should not ask Baghdad to do more than what these resolutions call for.

"The French line is that... the Iraqi government has to respect all Security Council resolutions."

"But we think we do not have to ask more... we have a text. We have to respect the text," Mr. Nodinot told reporters in his residence in Baghdad.

He said France's decision to restore diplomatic presence in Iraq after a four-year rupture was taken after Baghdad officially recognised Kuwait last year.

"Iraq's recognition of Kuwait was a key step," he said.

He said Paris was waiting what Rolf Ekeus — the U.N. official in charge of dismantling Iraq's banned weapons — would say in his forthcoming report in March.

"If Mr. Ekeus's report is positive, there will be new discussions at the Security Council," he said.

"We can find a reasonable solution," Mr. Nodinot said.

Fresh battles in Bihac

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Fresh fighting was reported in the Bihac enclave of north-west Bosnia on Wednesday.

U.N. peacekeepers said.

Rebel Muslim infantry who launched an assault on government fifth corps units in the enclave on Tuesday appeared to be backed up by heavy weaponry from Krajina Serb forces from Croatia, said U.N. spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward.

"We observed a tank and two multiple-barrelled rocket launchers moving down to the area the day before yesterday," Col. Coward told Reuters.

More shelling was reported overnight in the north of the enclave south of Velika Kladusa, with some 150 mortar, artillery or tank rounds reported between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. local, a U.N. spokesman said.

Fighting also flared in the south of the enclave on high ground near Bihac town on Tuesday evening but details were still sketchy.

U.N. observers reported a "lot of shelling" accompanied by small arms fire around the Grabec plateau to the east of the Bihac town, a U.N.-designated "safe area," said spokesman Major Herve Gourmelon. Mortar bombs or artillery rounds had also landed within the boundaries of the U.N. safe area in the past 24 hours.

The Muslim-led Bosnian government Fifth Corps is surrounded in the pocket by rebel Muslims loyal to local politician Fikret Abdic and allied Serb forces from Bosnia and Croatia.

Heavy shelling erupted on Tuesday near Kladusa, with some 1,000 explosions reported by five p.m. (1600 GMT).

A four-month ceasefire signed on New Year's Eve has failed to end fighting in the Bihac pocket despite repeated attempts by U.N. officials to persuade the combatants to honour the truce.

Rebel Muslims and Croatian Serb forces were not signatories to the ceasefire accord, which is coming under increasing strain.

Sporadic firing was reported elsewhere in Bosnia on Tuesday, with some 50 detonations registered south of Serb-held Doboj.

"Turkey opposes any developments which would further aggravate the present instability in the region," he said.

Abdic and Croatian Serb forces on Tuesday launched new attacks on government lines to the south east of Velika Kladusa, in the north of the pocket, Col. Coward said.

A total of 1,100 heavy weapon detonations were planted in the bomb in Zakho, a KDP stronghold. PUK dismissed the charge and said Baghdad was behind it.

In other developments, the U.N. monitored a number of flights by unidentified helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft in violation of the no-fly area over Bosnia on Tuesday night, Col. Coward said.

At least one light fixed-wing single-engine aircraft was reported over a highway landing strip, near the government-held town of Tuzla in the northeast of the country, and another at Visoko, near Sarajevo. Unidentified helicopters were also reported in several areas of Bosnia.

Egypt rejects any deal with Israel over NPT

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt would reject any Israeli compromise offer to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) two years after a global Middle East peace settlement.

Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Wednesday.

Mr. Musa told the Arab daily Al Sharq Al Awsat that Egypt would not accept such a commitment because "this is a political issue and extremely serious."

The only acceptable solution would be for the Jewish state to sign the nuclear treaty "given that this state has a nuclear programme of such a scale and aim to provoke suspicion," Musa added.

Israel, which has never acknowledged reports it has 300 nuclear warheads, has steadfastly refused to join the NPT so long as countries such as Iran and Iraq call for its destruction.

According to newspaper reports, however, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is privately considering signing the treaty two years after a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement including Iraq.

Egypt has rallied Arab countries to its refusal to sign an extension of the NPT when it comes up for renewal in April unless Israel joins.

Mr. Musa denied that the United States had put pressure on Egypt to agree to compromise solution to the nuclear dispute (see page 2).

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher starts a new Middle East tour next week partly aimed at persuading Arab countries to sign an indefinite and uncon-

Turkey condemns bombing urges Kurds to peace

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey strongly condemned

on Wednesday a carbomb

blast which killed 76 people

in northern Iraq.

It also urged rival Iraqi

Kurds to end 10 weeks of

fighting in the enclave.

"No matter who or which group is behind it, we strongly condemn this murderous incident," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said of the bomb which tore through a busy marketplace in the town of Zakho on Monday.

"Turkey opposes any developments which would further aggravate the present instability in the region," he said.

He said Turkey urged the rival Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) to avoid provocations and end without delay internal fighting which erupted in December.

KDP has accused the PUK

of planting the bomb in Zakho, a KDP stronghold. PUK dismissed the charge and said Baghdad was behind it.

Mr. Ataman said he had no knowledge of a Turkish military build-up on the border, a claim advanced by the Iraqi National Congress (INC) based in London.

The INC, an umbrella group of Iraqi dissidents, said on Tuesday about 20,000 men and armour were assembled on the Turkish side of the border.

Local journalists in the southeast said armed forces were moving in the region for an expected spring offensive against PUK rebels inside Turkey.

Mr. Ataman said Turkey did not dismiss the possibility that PUK could be involved in the Zakho incident.

They said any marked activity could also be part of border security measures considering the acute instability across the frontier.

Military officials were not immediately available for comment.

Turkey has about 250,000 men which it shifts across the region as needed to combat the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), fighting since 1984 for a separate Kurdish state.

More than 15,000 people have been killed in the insurgency.

Turkish units are positioned on the Turkish bank of the river marking the border with Iraq opposite Zakho, the INC said.

It said the scale of the troop movements was at least as large as a mobilisation by Ankara in October.

On November 1992, when Turkish troops launched a huge operation in northern Iraq against camps of separatist Turkish Kurds.

He said some 20,000 Turkish soldiers took part in the 1992 air and ground offensive, which left more than 1,000 people dead.

Northern Iraq, effectively dissociated from Baghdad's rule since 1991, is run jointly by a KDP-PUK administration based in Erbil but the uneasy partnership has all but crumbled in the latest round of violence.

An allied force based in southern Turkey protects the region against any attacks from Iraqi troops which crushed a Kurdish revolt after Iraq's Gulf war defeat.

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